

School of Theology at Claremont



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# PRESENT DAY PREACHING.

SERMONS.





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# PRESENT DAY PREACHING.

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## SERMONS BY

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## NOTE.

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THE present volume is the product of the heart and  
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Sermons were originally published from time to time  
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in this form.

We trust that they will be suggestive to those  
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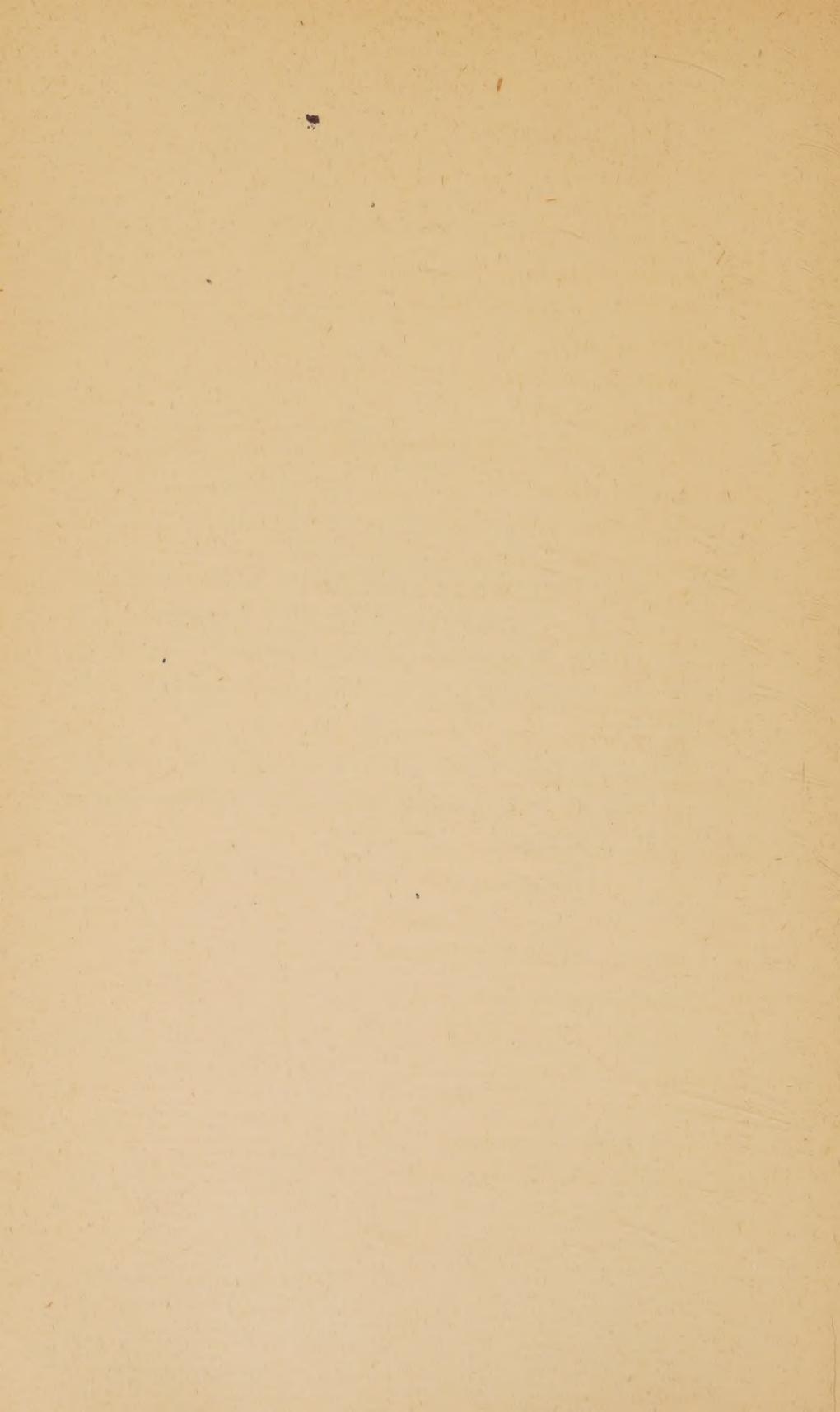
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## CURIOSITY AND OBLIGATION.

BY THE REV. THOMAS G. SELBY.

*“Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?”*—JOHN xxi. 21-23.

IT is interesting to observe the different, and in some cases apparently opposite, ways in which Christ deals with disciples of different tempers, histories, vocations. In this morning scene on the lake shore, He brings into view, by a prophetic word, the tragic martyrdom awaiting Peter, the chief of the Apostles, but not a single word will He breathe to suggest John's future career, be it of service or of pain. And this is not caprice. There are well-weighed reasons, some of them quite obvious, for the varying and apparently contradictory method of dealing with the two men.

The forecast of Peter's future is vouchsafed unasked and for very important ends. The gift of prophecy must never be used to satisfy an idle curiosity, and the question about John had an element of that sort in it. At first sight it might not seem to be quite true to nature to represent Peter as the subject of this temper in a moment of such tragic interest, when his own pathetic future had just come flashing into view; but men and women, in extreme pain, often show a keen interest in the affairs of their friends. We have all met with sufferers of estimable character who have welcomed every little bit of romance from the countryside that could be taken to their bedsides. Perhaps the romance may have helped them to forget for the time their own terrible lot. By busying himself with the events in the unopened chapters of John's life, Peter may have been seeking relief from the strain to which his feelings must have been put at receiving this hint about the last dark scene of his own life. His curiosity was kindly and well meant, but curiosity implies a defect somewhere or other in the quality of our faith, and we always tempt the Lord when we indulge a spirit of restless inquisitiveness.

It would, moreover, have brought the restored Peter into a new temptation to have answered the question he put. It must have tended to revive the old rivalry between himself and the favored son of Zebedee. Indeed, by reminding us at this point of those special marks of favor shown to himself in the past, John seems to intimate that underneath Peter's request to know something of the future of his rival there was the disposition to institute a new

comparison. Had the high place of Peter been permanently forfeited by his unfaithfulness? Was Peter's destined pain judicial and an ineffaceable mark of his humiliation, or was it a stepping-stone to after distinction in the kingdom of Heaven? How will these two men match in their future careers? Would John reach a higher distinction by a less thorny pathway? What was John's course to be, and would that give any clue to the throne he would come to fill? Such perilous questions as these might have been stirred by an answer to Peter's request, if indeed, they did not already suggest the words, "Lord, what shall this man do?"

The terrible lot to which Peter was appointed may have been made known by the Master for the purpose of saving Peter from undue discouragement as he thought of his own barren boast of heroism and allegiance. It may have been a part of his forgiveness that he should be declared worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, and an evangel of spiritual power to assure him that, under new conditions, he should realize his uttermost ideal of sacrifice. John had professed no confidence in his own martyr devotion, and did not need any such message as was addressed to his fellow-disciple. It seemed fitting to the Master that the newly comforted Apostle should be reminded, moreover, that his present conquest of pride and self-will would not be accepted without the sharpest possible tests. With such a bitter ending to his work it was expedient that Peter should have timely knowledge of what was yet to come, and should prepare himself by prayer for the stern conflict of blood. For the discipline and perfecting of John's character no such ordeal as this may have been needed. The life of the beloved disciple proved itself one of quiet and loving service, with little persecution in it, as those rough times went. He did not need to be equipped by prophetic warning for a great tragedy of woe. The different types of service and suffering appointed to the two men may explain to some extent Christ's different methods of dealing with them.

Peter's question concerning John threatened *an unseemly encroachment upon Christ's sovereign rights over the work and destinies of the disciples*. Christ had first called, and then, with His own blood, redeemed the twelve, and had so established a supreme claim to determine all that concerned them, and it ill became the disciple, who had forsaken his Master in the agonizing moments that made His ransomed servants an inviolable possession, to arrogate to himself what looked very much like a coassessorship with the Master, in fixing the lots of the several disciples. Peter's question assumes that he has the right to say something on the subject. The temptation to officiousness and egotism presents itself in the golden moments of his restoration, and whilst he is hearing a strange premonition of the manner of his own death. He asks about the after-career of the humbler and more steadfast disciple at his heels, as though he were godfather, and must needs inspect and

review and certify the counsels of the Lord's providence concerning him. No wonder men came to believe in the official supremacy of Peter, for in his less watchful moments he believed in it himself, and we are accustomed to take men at their own estimate. But the Master admits Peter to no place of primacy over his fellows, He puts upon him no sponsorship for their work and welfare, He pays no respect to his assumed right as spokesman, and will not consent to place the threads of the future in his hands. The risen Lord must needs remind Peter that his duty is to follow and imitate, and obey, and not to judge; and to do this will employ all the thought and strength he can bring to bear. He is misconceiving Christ and his own relation to Christ. As Jesus appears with the prints of His death in hands and feet, the witness of a perfected redemption, and the pattern of every divine excellence, Peter is in danger for the moment of making Him out a magnified fortuneteller. No wonder the question was repelled. Christ fixes the life and determines the service and suffering of His disciples as He thinks best, and will have no intrusion upon His prerogative. The sanctification of Christ's blood rests upon that life and service, and every question that trenches upon Christ's royal right as Redeemer is an impertinence.

In His rebuke of Peter Christ perhaps did imply that John's life should be longer than that of his contemporaries, but even that is not very specific. It may have been necessary that the youngest of the twelve should be spared as a link between Christ and the succeeding century. But such matters belong to the wisdom and authority of the Master Himself to settle. If He think well, the one who leaned upon His bosom shall be exempt from the bitterness of martyrdom, and translated without seeing death, or he shall be kept with a charmed life upon earth, the venerable patriarch of a new dispensation, vying with Enoch and Methuselah in his stretch of days. The Master does not hold Himself bound to adjust the incidents of one life to those of contemporary life, or to establish any kind of equality between the careers of disciples who stand side by side. It is not fitting that Peter, in the hour of his restoration, should intrude into matters that are entirely within the province of the Lord Himself to define and appoint. The crown right of redemption belongs to Christ and not to the chief Apostle, and Christ will rule in His own kingdom. It is enough that Peter is suffered to feed the sheep without determining where the sheep shall be pastured, and what adventures shall befall his comrades, the undershepherds, and when the undershepherds and the several portions of the flock over which they watch shall be called back from the bleak hillsides and received into the jasper city. Peter must follow Christ, not pry into the secrets of His administration. Questions like that put by Peter not only distract the thought from the obligation of personal devotion and obedience,

but they ignore the difference of position between the exalted Master and the immature and unproved disciple.

*Duty, Christ intimates, is the most important part of destiny,* and the purpose of His Word is to guide and train and strengthen in duty, rather than prematurely to unfold the romance of our after-days. Indeed, we make our own history as we go along and there is no fortune worth talking about other than that which we work out for ourselves by successive acts of obedience to Christ. It is idle for us to seek to know things that will befall us in the after-times, for whatever is vital springs out of ourselves. Peter's question perhaps implies that duty and destiny are not uniformly interdependent things. Fit occasion and opportunity are necessary to achieve the work of the man or of the apostle, and no man without tragic ordeals in his life could ever hope to sit on the Lord's right hand or left. Are there grand openings in the man's pathway? Will he have the chance of distinction? Can he write his name on some page of the world's history? That is the false view. He does great things who obeys the call of duty, and there is no term that can be put to the honor opening out before that man who sets himself steadfastly to follow Christ. The foredetermined incidents of a man's history are the least important things about it, mere dust poised for a moment in the air and gone. The day comes on apace when conduct will count for everything. The life of man must be cherished not so much for the romance to which it may give rise, but for those spiritual qualities that reach fruition there. Life may be ensheathed in splendor, and full of imperial occasions, and yet beggarly in its issues. Personal loyalty to Jesus Christ is the one interest which must absorb our thought and strength. If we could know our own destinies or the destinies of those to whom we are attached, it might be a temptation to supineness or a demoralizing distraction. We might find ourselves in the position of the man who rests upon the gifts of fortune, and never shows the world one tithe of what is within him. Unnecessary preoccupation with the affairs of others may blind us to the force of individual obligation and betray us into faithlessness. The future of the disciple is with Christ no less than our own, and we must be quite content to leave it there. Do not dissipate the strength needed for personal service in amiable officiousness about the concerns of others.

It is your high privilege to follow Christ. His voice calls you, and if you follow you will allure other feet into the same pathway of honor and immortality, and add something of value to their destinies.

The craving for romance, which sometimes takes quite a religious form, is the sign of a *restless, unsatisfied, and insufficiently exercised mind.*

Two things ought to have brought absolute contentment to Peter on this fair, early summer morning by the quiet lake shore:

the thrilling incident of his own forgiveness, and the new vocation coming from the Master who had so graciously restored him. Oh, the marvellous face in which it seemed impossible to find a frown, and that beamed sunshine once more upon the despairing apostate's head! Here was room enough for all the quiet wonder of which his poetic nature was capable. What unfathomed depths in this matchless generosity! This hour with the Master should have been an unbroken psalm of praise. But Peter wanted, by reading an unopened page in the history of John, to get away from his own humiliations, to escape the hand that had been probing his conscience, to forget the wound dealt by the gentle ministry of his Lord to his pride. If men and women would submit to know the worst about themselves, and then be content to receive the free forgiveness and healing extended to them by Jesus Christ, there would be less of this feverish craving for romance, less eagerness to pry into the concerns of others, or, failing to find that sufficiently exciting, to live in an imaginary world. And then Peter ought to have found the vocation just defined, and for the fulfilment of which his newly-received forgiveness was to inspire the motive, full of endless interest and fascination. In after-days he came to find more than enough for his thought there, and if he had been fully awake now he would not have been so eager to rush off into a side-issue. The grace that gave to him the privilege of caring for Christ's redeemed flock should have cured the last spasm of restlessness and brought the profound contentment of established love. His susceptibility to the romance of the unknown was the proof that his nature had faculties which the vast interests of his work at present did not satisfy. If life is not sufficiently interesting to us, if we cry out for that which more effectually stirs the blood, if we want sensation, be it in our own lives or in the lives of those about us, that is a sufficient proof of the fact that we are not alive either to the infinite privilege of our forgiveness, or to the vast duties and responsibilities that are laid upon us, and that we cannot be permitted to decline.

The life of a city, in spite of its struggle and hardship, is far nobler than that of the gossipy, inquisitive, romanceful village. The busybody seems inseparable from the life of the stagnant, sleepy hamlet, where the people have not half enough to think about, and the very clay that cleaves to their boots seems to get into the brain and clog its movements. The next-door neighbor does duty for book, newspaper, lecture, concert. In the tattle of his inquisitive acquaintances a man is betrothed, married, made rich, brought to the work-house, dies half a dozen times, and touches the extremes of all baseness on the one hand, and all heroism on the other, not once or twice only in the course of one short life.

The village would die of *ennui* apart from the opportunity of speculating upon the little details of his history. His past is the subject of village tradition, his present of village criticism,

his future of village prophecy. The poor folk have not enough to occupy their brains, and use up all vacant faculties in diversions of this sort. But do not let us be too hard on the village. Now and again we find traces of the same temper in the towns. Those people who impersonate the genius of the village, and spend much of their time in personalities and social and domestic forecasts and fortune-telling, have not quite enough to do to absorb their powers. Curiosity is sometimes idle, sometimes envious, sometimes good-natured, and sometimes a compound. The supply of romance in actual life is so stinted in comparison with some people's demands that they are driven to spend the larger proportion of their thought and emotion upon purely fictitious characters. The study of an occasional novel may be very well as a literary recreation, but the inordinate passion for it is the symptom of an unoccupied mind, a mind that neither knows the measure of its own privilege or duty.

This same temper sometimes takes on the form of piety. Men gloat over prophecies about the immediate future of the world. They revel in grotesque speculations about the ten heads, and the two witnesses, and the drying-up of the Euphrates, and the pouring out of the last vials. Such subjects, however loud the piety with which they are mixed up, take the mind away from duty. The man who knows the measure of his Lord's forgiveness, and realizes what the work is he has been set to do, will have no care for these extravagances of pre-millenarian sooth-saying.

What an entertaining book the New Testament would become if we could forecast each other's destinies by a study of its pages! A biography that dealt with events still hanging in the air by the sheer force of its fascination would push all fiction out of the world. We have biographies written by friends and biographies written by enemies, and biographies written by the modest men who are the subjects of them, but biographies of living men written by gossipy prophets, speaking with an approximate degree of truthfulness, would cause an unprecedented rush to the circulating libraries. Such biographies would be immeasurably more interesting than the most popular of the society papers with their sketches of "Celebrities at Home." But Christ speaks of some higher purpose than to help people to prophesy about each other and to minister to the romance of the world. And Christ's Word is no more meant to help us to prophesy about the fortunes of nations than it is to prophesy about the fortunes of individuals, except so far as those fortunes are the fruit of conduct. Fanatics arise from time to time who look upon the Bible as the grand horoscope of the nations. We may allow that they are pious, although a little more piety would save them from their fiascoes and exegesis. If John's contemporaries had possessed less of Peter's curiosity and more of John's quiet and loving devotion to duty, they would have been under no temptation to foist a prophecy into Christ's words concerning John. The Book of Daniel, or the

Apocalypse, its New Testament counterpart, is the shrine of the international fortune-teller. He spreads the curtains of its symbolism about him like a tent, and tells us what is to become of Rome, Turkey and Russia, and France, and Germany, and Great Britain. The mantle is that of Daniel or John, but the voice is that of some pre-millenarian mountebank. "Lord, what shall this church do? How will the map of Europe run after the next great war? When shall the forces of Gog and Magog close in deadly conflict?" Very interesting, of course. But all that brings the Divine Word into contempt and takes us away from the obligation the Lord places upon us. It fosters unsanctified curiosity, a feverish thirst for prodigy and omen and pious melodrama. The message to us as to Peter is, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

Christ's Word needs for its correct interpretation *a delicate and unprejudiced logic* that can only be exercised in quiet and unostentatious moods of the soul. Precise grammatical criticism may sometimes be necessary if we are to do justice to Christ and His sayings. The first disciples befooled themselves and laid their Master open to the gravest misconception because they ignored the conditional mood in which Christ had spoken concerning John. Perhaps the honor in which the early Church held the Apostle Peter may have blinded many to the fact that Christ had rebuked him and refused to directly answer the question he asked. The prepossessions that swayed them may have led them to put their own gloss on Christ's words. In all probability they shared the curious, prediction-craving temper of Peter, and were eager for the strange, the piquant, the romanceful. And this desire to see the wonderful in the history of the infant Church and its leaders led astray. They dropped Christ's all-important "If" and made His statement categorical. In John they came to recognize one proof against the darts of death, and justified the view by a careless tradition about Christ's words. But for John's correction of this error in his own lifetime, the death of this last Apostle might have been an irreparable disaster to the early Church. The Word of Jesus would seem to have been falsified, and the faith of many a disciple would have been wrecked, and the mouth of the scoffer opened wide.

Holiness and infallibility are not convertible terms, but there can be little doubt we should be secure against nine-tenths of the errors into which we fall if we were delivered from prejudices and preconceptions that have a close relation to defect of character, and learned to cherish the quiet, undistracted, duty-loving spirit inculcated in Christ's words to Peter.

We sometimes assume we may have religion without the close study of God's Word, and think piety is all that can be asked even if it is divorced from intelligence. The Bible is quoted as though it gave some kind of sanction to this view, and we are reminded that "the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

But the way referred to by the prophet is the way of holiness and not of prognostication. Good people do err, but we are apt to encourage them in their errors by allowing too large a margin for human infirmity. Error is minimized as men become morally and spiritually perfect. We learn too much Scripture from each other and too little at the Fountain Head. Be accurate, and to that end be spiritual. It was the temper of wild, unsanctified sensationalism which led to the misinterpretation of Christ's words.

These words, penned in the closing days of St. John, show *the suspicion with which he regarded mere tradition*. He passes an unmistakable stricture upon it in this last paragraph of his Gospel, and implies that it must not be accepted as uniformly trustworthy. Luke in the opening, as well as John in the closing, words of his record, recognizes the necessity there is to sift and correct reminiscences of Christ passed by word of mouth from one to another. The largest religious community of Christendom put tradition on an equal footing with the New Testament. Roman Catholic theologians have sometimes written about the Bible in a style befitting the blatant unbeliever of the market-place for the sake of enforcing the supposed necessity of supplementing the written Word by the traditions and authoritative interpretation of the Church. The ritualist will sometimes allow that he can find no trace of his special dogmas in the apostolic epistles, but then he falls back upon the traditions of the early Church, and the writings of the Fathers. Alas for the argument! John himself pricks it in the words before us. The error in reporting and applying Christ's sayings about the beloved disciple was all but universal in the primitive Church, but it was an error all the same. As much careless and irresponsible talk was current then as in the Church to-day, and we may be thankful that it has not all come down to us. We sometimes deplore the fact that we have only fragments of Christ's life. But we have all that is needed for salvation, and what we have is so sifted that it may command our unlimited confidence. We should scarcely be the gainers if the whole body of contemporary tradition was before us, for there was not a little alloy in it, and that which has survived the fire is gold. Let us show our loyalty to the Word by searching out the clear, definite teaching, and abiding by it. Some of us do not like a gloss to be removed from the text of the Bible, or a time-honored interpretation of any of its sayings, however unsound, to be brushed away. The man who holds himself bound by mere tradition is a child of falsehood, and does not honor the Master who is truth. We gain more than we can ever lose by scrupulous accuracy.

*How much more perfect the word of Christ would seem if we would lay aside the idle and barren questions we sometimes bring!* By trying to extort from it replies to interrogations that are beyond its proper scope we undermine its authority over ourselves and impair its influence in the world. Jesus Christ is quite content

to let the newspapers monopolize the idea of a column for answers to inquirers and correspondents. Do not let us expect Him to furnish the material for our essays in history, science, or romance. If the Bible is falling in the esteem of our age we are responsible for it. We have put about it the atmosphere of our frail suggestion, and it is sometimes difficult to say where the erring self ends and the unerring Bible begins. We dandle it as though it were a rubber doll to be pinched and twisted into any shape the fancy of the moment may dictate, or made to speak and silenced at our demand. We bring our folly into partnership with its wisdom, and the world can scarcely tell to what extent the Bible is responsible and to what extent its fallible devotees. Address the deepest questions of the conscience to the Bible, for without hesitation or ambiguity it will answer them ; but if you so seek to glut your curiosity and its shrine it will say bluffly, as Christ to Peter, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." The Gospel is Christ's voice, and it speaks not to divert or entertain, but to guide, to save, to redeem. Meet it on its own level, and do not expect it to descend to your caprice.

Some years ago, in company with two other tourists, I climbed the highest mountain in Norway. The evening previous to the ascent we engaged a guide at what seemed to be rather a heavy charge, but were told that the crevasses were many, and that we should need to be roped together to cross them, and possibly there would be places where steps would have to be cut with the ice-axe. We must have a first-rate guide, and the guide would need to take an assistant, and, all things considered, the sum asked was not excessive. The next morning a little boy of not more than ten summers presented himself at the door of the hotel who could speak just one word of English, "Yes." "Where is the guide for whom we have paid in gold ?" "Yes," was the somewhat dubious reply, and the little man pointed us onward to the mountain. We began to think ourselves cheated, and to rate our quondam guide. "Yes," was the soft answer returned to our wrathful scoldings, and the infant mountaineer smiled and nodded, and with outstretched hand pointing towards the peak, strutted onwards. In a somewhat sceptical and ill-tempered mood we followed him for four or five miles, and at last found our practised guide with his ropes and ice-axe awaiting us at the edge of the snow-field. He was not going to spend his strength in leading us over the foot-hills and saving us from wet shoes by pointing out the best way across the morass. The child could do that just as well.

And in the same way the Bible meets us at the dividing line between our mortal and immortal natures. Just where the natural ends and the spiritual begins it patiently waits, ready to lead us up into realms of spotless white and out into the sublime immensity of God. For our guidance on the lower ranges of life we have the historian, the dramatist, the man of science, the social philosopher,

the political economist. Do not expect Christ to make special revelations concerning the interests that are purely transitory. His Word will answer every question of the moral life, will save you from tragic pitfalls, and will direct and uphold your footsteps in your march towards God and the peace and blessedness which dwell under the shadow of His throne.

It is interesting to remember that some thirty or forty years later *each of these two disciples spoke again upon the subject of prophecy*, and to each had come in the interval a most notable elevation and enlargement of view. St. Peter tells us that the prophets “prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow” (I. Pet. i. 2). St. John also tells us that “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. xix. 10). Each had come to see that it was the special function of prophecy to deal with the Master rather than with the individual adventures and experiences of disciples. Its aim was to anticipate His coming and to extol His work when it had been fulfilled. It had little concern with the separate fortunes of the disciples and that for the best reasons—the destiny of the true disciple was bound up with that of the Master, and the whole Church would share at last the honor and victory of its Lord.

If you could prophesy about the future of the tree you would need no prophecy about the health and fruitfulness of the separate branches, for they partake the fortune of the tree. If you could say of a man he will become a millionaire, or he will wield a sceptre, you would not need to prophesy about the future of his children, or, at least, they that remained dutiful members of the family circle. If the father becomes rich, it will be their own fault, and their own fault alone, if the children are beggars. If he comes to wear a crown, they of course rise to be princes in the same event. If you could anticipate the future of the British throne you would anticipate at the same time the future of its possessions and dependencies. The smallest island colony will rise or fall in the splendor or the abasement of the throne. The destiny of the disciple is bound up with that of the Lord, and does not need its separate prophecies. If I am His servant, dying in His death, quickened in His resurrection, hallowed by the unfailing ministries of His mediatorial life, the power of His enthronement will compass me about all my days, and the splendor of His exaltation will at last reflect itself into my immortal being. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Everything is frivolous, however large it may bulk in the passing moment, that lies outside our relation to Christ. A century hence the question, Did he become rich, or was his life a perpetual struggle

with no earthly success to crown it? was he famous or obscure to the very end? was his career even and smooth, or thorny and full of pain? will not be worth the asking. The only question of the slightest moment will be, Was he a disciple? Did he follow Christ? Was he accepted in the Beloved? Relegate to their due obscurity and insignificance all the side issues of life. Let Christ's words to the restored Apostle, "Follow me," ring in your ears and solemnize your hearts and keep you steadfast in your look towards eternal mysteries.

## A BURDENOME STONE.

BY HUGH MACMILLAN, D.D., LL.D.

*“And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people.”*—ZECHARIAH xii. 3.

IN the Highlands of Perthshire there is a famous boulder, or round stone, locally known by the name of the Bodach, or old man. It was used as a test of strength in ancient times. When a young man wished to be numbered among the athletes of the district, he was called upon to lift this stone, and place it on a pedestal of rock beside it, almost three feet above the ground. It was a severe test, because the stone was not only very large and heavy, but also slippery, and, owing to its roundness, gave no purchase or holding point. Most persons could not move the stone at all; and only a few could raise it fairly a few inches from the ground. Art was required as well as strength; and sometimes the slim little man succeeded when the heavy strong man failed. This custom in pre-historic times was very widespread. Throughout Palestine the young men of the primitive race exercised themselves in the same way as the natives of the Scottish glen. Large round stones were kept in the villages, near the shrines of worship, as tests of strength. He who lifted such a stone highest, or set it upon its appointed pedestal, was declared the victor, and had special rights and privileges as his reward. St. Jerome mentions that he had seen a heavy globe of brass in Athens which was employed to test the strength of the wrestlers; none being admitted as candidates in the public games who could not lift this globe. And we are told that when the Christian slaves, taken by the Algerine pirates, used to be sold in the market-place, they were compelled to lift a particular stone placed there for the purpose of testing their strength.

It is to this well-known custom that the prophet alludes. He compares Jerusalem to one of those testing-stones which the nations around tried to lift, and found themselves foiled in their utmost efforts. Siege after siege was sustained, but the enemy was baffled; or, if it did prevail, its temporary victory resulted in greater loss, and often in final ruin. From the day that David conquered the old fortress of Jebus and made it the capital of his kingdom, it defied and repelled every invader who sought to fit the stone of Jerusalem into any of the political structures which he wished to erect. It was so impregnable that the Psalmist spoke of Mount Zion as a place which could not be moved, but abideth for ever. Its fortifications were so lofty and massive that they were the wonder of all beholders, and far surpassed everything else of the

kind in the world. They were formed of enormous blocks so exactly fitted to one another that the whole fortress looked like one huge rock. Well might David, rejoicing in the strength and security of his capital, allude in enthusiastic language to these remarkable features as fitting symbols of the divine protection, and to the awe with which they struck the minds of those monarchs who came to besiege the city, when they first beheld them. "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the side of the north, the city of the great king. For, lo, the kings have assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

It is notorious in history how frequently Jerusalem was made a burdensome stone to all who attempted to lift it and place it upon their own pedestal, and make it part of their own dominions. It was the testing-stone of the strength of all the nations. They all wanted to possess it because of its unique advantages. The conquest of it was considered the greatest crown of glory that could be put upon a monarch's head. He who could enter its gates in triumph could lift up his head above all contemporary warriors. There was a power more than human supposed to defend it, an awful sanctity connected with it; and victory gained over it was, therefore, considered a victory not only over man, but over the gods themselves. It is a remarkable fact that the Holy Land has been alternately owned by almost every race of man. All the families of mankind have in turn ruled over it, as if to symbolize its connection with the highest interests of man, and to indicate that it was the bond of union by which all the nations were to be blessed. And it is equally remarkable that the Holy City has also been a bone of contention among all the families of the earth, and has passed into the possession of all the principal nations in turn. One after another they measured their strength against it. And to them all it proved a burdensome stone. If, after terrible exertions, they partially lifted it off its site, it fell and crushed their feet. And this because the Lord of Hosts was against them. It was the gravitation of Heaven that gave that remarkable stone its weight and solidity which baffled its enemies. It belonged to the kingdom which cannot be moved. The strength of man could not prevail against it, because the strength of God was in it. It was He who built it so compactly together. The name by which He Himself was known was the "Stone of Israel";

and He imparted to it His own stability and enduringness and power of resistance.

As the monument of God's goodness and faithfulness, Jerusalem would never have been overthrown, or lifted off its rocky pedestal, had it fulfilled the divine purpose in its erection, had it proved itself worthy of the sacred trust committed to it as the citadel of divine truth, had its temple sanctified it, and its people been all righteous as God meant them to be. We have David's graphic description of what ought to be the character and conduct of those who should be counted worthy to be citizens of the Holy City: "Who shall ascend into the hill of God? Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbor. He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth from his heart." And had the inhabitants of the city reached or maintained this high ideal; had the city carried out faithfully this stern exclusiveness of all that is mean and base, this noble intolerance of all the social and personal evils that sap the strength of a race; had the people generally walked in their house with a perfect heart as David resolved to do; then the city would have remained throned on its high rock, an invincible and invulnerable power. He who entered it with the possession of the ark, when the ancient gates of Jebus were called upon to lift up their heads to receive a greater potentate than had ever before passed beneath them, even the King of Glory, He would have made it His perpetual abode. God would have been its refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. It would have had no cause to fear though the earth should be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. But, alas! it soon lost its sanctity and became the seat of worldliness and covetousness. And therefore God forsook it, and it became weak as other cities. Its very strength upon which it prided itself proved its destruction; and the Babylonians came and razed the city to its foundations, and carried away its people captive.

When, afterwards, the Lord permitted them to return and rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, for a little while the inhabitants profited by the lessons of adversity, and established on the Holy Hill of Zion once more the pure worship of God, and then the city was impregnable. All through the wars of the Maccabees it was defended by its heroic citizens with unexampled courage and devotion. They performed prodigies of valor that brought back the memory of the grand days of Joshua and Gideon. The power of faith triumphed in the tremendous struggle. "By faith they escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." But, as the years rolled on, the inhabitants of Jerusalem took unhallowed advantage of their sense of security and of the favor which God had shown to them. Once more the old pride and pre-

sumption and worldliness took possession of them, and corrupted the worship of the living and true God. And in our Saviour's time we see to what a depth of degradation the Holy City had sunk. It had become the shrine of the most finished religious conventionalism and Pharisaic hypocrisy the world has ever seen. It had become obnoxious to God. It provoked the fierce vengeance of Rome. This champion athlete of the world, before whom all other nations had been subdued, tried its strength against the burdensome stone of Jerusalem ; and in the terrible siege which our Lord foretold, and likened to the judgment of the last day, the Roman army overthrew its bulwarks, and left not one stone upon another.

But though God used the wicked as His sword wherewith to punish His own people, He did not allow the wicked to escape the punishment which their own evil deeds deserved. He destroyed the destroyer ; and to those who succeeded in lifting the sacred stone off its lofty site, it proved indeed a burdensome stone. It not only exhausted their strength ; its fall proved their ruin. No weapon that was formed against the Holy City ever prospered. The Assyrian empire perished, and the Roman empire has vanished ; and all the nations that have been conspicuous in persecuting the covenant people have declined from their former high position and sunk into obscurity. This burdensome stone has been a millstone round the neck of every people by whom an offence against the Israel of God has come, which has sunk them into the depths of the sea.

Like the Holy City has been the Church, in which the spiritual idea of the old Jerusalem is reproduced and continued. It is the pillar and ground of truth, the citadel for the maintenance and defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. To worldly men who have endeavored to make it the centre and pivot of their ambitious schemes, it has ever proved a burdensome stone. Statesmen have ever and anon sought through its means for the divine sanction and blessing upon their selfish policies. They have mixed it up with earthly institutions, and placed it on the same level ; and in return for the support which they have required from it, they have invested it with worldly pomp and material gifts. In so far as they have done this, they have not only undermined its true influence, but their evil work has recoiled upon themselves. The mixture of church-craft and state-craft, like the incongruous mixture of the iron and clay in the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's statue, has ever been a source of weakness and not of strength. All who have regarded and used the Church in this way, as a mere human organization, resting solely on the powers and policies of the world, and not as a kingdom of God, whose authority is not derived from this world, have found this spiritual stone unadaptable and unmanageable. Lifted out of its own proper position and made to serve as the keystone in the arch of some political system which man has

built, so far from making the arch more secure, it has endangered its safety, and in due time it has brought it to the ground. The stone which Constantine the Great made the chief corner-stone of his political structure broke the proud Roman empire, founded upon it, to pieces. The exaltation of the Church above the State, which was the great Hildebrand's dream of a world-wide Christian empire, prepared the way for the downfall of the Papal kingdom ; and when the Pope of Rome claimed to be a temporal sovereign, he but undermined the foundation upon which his spiritual authority was based. And all who among ourselves make the Church an instrument of worldly ambition or expediency, will find it to be indeed a burdensome stone. Like the fabled stone of Sisyphus, which he rolled up the hill only to roll down again, they will find their efforts baffled when they seem most successful, and their plans made abortive when they were about to be fulfilled ; and the stone in its fall will seriously bruise and injure those who wished to put it in a place for which it was not designed.

But there is another extreme. While some would cut off the heavenly connection of the Church, and bring their human authority to bear upon it in order to win outward homage and support for it, others would wish to separate it altogether from earthly institutions, and to regard it as an exclusively spiritual association. Misunderstanding the language of Christ when He said, " My kingdom is not of this world," they suppose that His kingdom is divorced from the affairs of the world, and takes no cognizance of the common affairs of life. They look upon the Church as a mere fold in the wilderness, in which souls are shut in from the secular world to meditate upon divine things and to prepare for eternity. It has nothing to do with human economy, with the administration of law and government, with the arts and sciences and industries of life. It concerns men only in their spiritual and eternal interests. To all who would thus seek to remove the Church from its legitimate position, it will prove a burdensome stone. We have an awful example of the effects produced by the separation of the Church from the world in the days when the Church became one vast monastic institution, and to be a Christian was to retire into the desert as a hermit or a recluse. The world, deprived of the hallowing influences of association with the Church, became more reckless and wicked ; and the Church, shut up from its proper work in the world, became morbid and superstitious, a prey to the numerous vices which idleness and loneliness invariably produce. Evils of an analogous kind would be certain to result from the divorce of the Church from the world at the present day. The world would become more godless and the Church more sanctimonious. Materialism would increase. The affairs of the world would be administered in a purely worldly spirit ; and the religious sanctions which at present guard our most sacred and cherished institutions would disappear at the demands of business or pleasure,

or be sacrificed to appease the clamors of a triumphant secularism.

It follows, then, that the Church is not to be made a mere political institution on the one hand, or on the other hand a mere spiritual institution. It is to be associated with temporal things, for man is both a body and a soul; it is to be associated with spiritual things, for man belongs to eternity as well as to time. Free to exercise its own spiritual functions within its own spiritual province, it is at the same time to sanctify all the interests and relations of human life, to bring everything with which man deals into subjection to the higher laws of eternity, so that there may be holiness to the Lord upon the very bells of the horses, and the pots of household use may be consecrated equally with the vessels of the sanctuary to the service of Heaven. It is not an archaic institution existing among us on account of the prestige of antiquity, but the ever-living agency by whose means and ordinances the ever-living Saviour works to-day as He worked eighteen hundred years ago. It is worthy to receive all the tributes of the world. Kings are to be its nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers, and the nation and kingdom that will not serve it shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. But all that it asks is to be left free to employ its own spiritual force to carry out its great aims, to make all men willing and loving subjects of the King of kings, and to hasten the time when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of God and His Christ. All who help it in this righteous cause shall themselves have the prosperity of those who labor for the prosperity of Zion. All who abuse it for selfish or ambitious purposes will be seriously injured in their own souls. Like the stone in the monarch's dream, the Church used aright will smite down the most formidable idols of the world, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But perverted, it will crush by its weight every frail human structure of which it is made the cope-stone.

Jesus Christ is the testing stone of men, the tried stone which all the ages have not been able to disintegrate, and from which "all the hammers of criticism have never chipped a single fragment." Every human being is brought to try his strength with this Stone. If, in the exercise of a living faith, you set yourselves earnestly to the task, you will get power from on high to lift this Stone, and set it in its proper place as the corner-stone of your faith. You will find it a light burden; the duties of the Christian religion will be to you easy and pleasant; your burden will be your support, your weakness your strength. And as living stones built upon the Living Stone, you will partake of the life, durability and blessedness of your foundation. But if, as self-willed builders, you reject this Stone as unfit to be the corner-stone of your religious edifice, then, when it is brought forth with rejoicings to crown the great structure of faith in the end, it will

fall upon you and crush you. This Stone will be a stumbling-block and a rock of offence to you, so long as you refuse to make the right use of it. What Simeon said of Jesus is solemnly true, "This child is set for the rise and fall of many in Israel." The "Stone of Israel" is set for your fall if you reject it; you will stumble against it and be sorely hurt; your heart will be dissatisfied, your conscience will accuse you, your life will be vain and lost. It is set for your rise if you make it the foundation of your hopes, the stepping-stone to all heavenly things. He will attract you like the loadstone if your character is kindred, if there is any good thing towards God in your heart; it will repel you like the same loadstone, if you have nothing in you like Him. He will be burdensome to you if you will have nothing to do with Him, for you cannot do without Him; He will bear all the burdens of your life, and give you rest if you lean the weight of your souls upon Him.

## ST. PAUL'S GOSPEL.

BY THE REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

*“Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh ; even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more.”*—II. COR. v. 16.

I WONDER what impression that strange sentence produces upon the mind of an average Englishman. Does it give him any intelligible idea at all ? Does it convey any meaning to your mind now ? Yet St. Paul, as every careful and profound student of his writings would admit, undoubtedly regarded that sentence as one of the most important and characteristic he ever wrote. It reminds us of the striking difference between him and the other Apostles. You and I may not think much about it. Every one thought much of it when it was written. St. Paul never saw Christ ; he never heard Christ during our Saviour's brief life on earth of thirty-three years. But all the other Apostles, as St. Peter was most careful to say when Matthew was elected into the apostolic band, had been disciples “all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that he was received up from them into Heaven.” But while Christ lived on earth St. Paul never knew Him. Now, the Apostles and the Jewish Christians generally attached the very greatest importance to the fact that they had thus known Christ. And many Jewish Christians went all over the world declaring that St. Paul, because he had not known Christ after the flesh, was not an Apostle, and could not be an Apostle ; that he lacked what, in their judgment, was an essential qualification for the office. This very consideration was one of the principal causes of his life-long controversies with the Church of Jerusalem. St. Paul, on the other hand, instead of bewailing his disqualification, as they represented it, declared with special emphasis it made no difference at all.

### HE NEVER SAW CHRIST.

You will remember how emphatically in a characteristic passage in Galatians he repudiated the idea that he owed anything at all to the other Apostles. They were in no sense his superiors. They were in no sense better qualified for their office because they had known Christ after the flesh and he had not. When at last, after many years, he did go up to Jerusalem, it certainly was not to receive ordination at their hands, or their approval or their sanction. When he met those Apostles who had known Christ in the flesh he declared, “They, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me” (Gal. ii. 6). He declares that their knowledge of Christ after the flesh was no advantage to them whatever, and

in the passage before us he goes so far as to say that if he himself had known Christ after the flesh, he would have rid himself of the knowledge, for that knowledge at that particular time was a danger and a temptation. It led men to exaggerate the importance of those things about Christ which were seen and temporal, and to overlook to some extent those things which alone were of everlasting importance. As a matter of fact, those who did thus know Christ after the flesh either never realized His true glory or were many long years in coming to the knowledge of Him. In order to guard against this misconception St. Paul went even to an extreme, and emphasized in every way his ignorance of Christ after the flesh. Have you ever realized the startling fact that St. Paul never once refers to the lovely life of our Lord as recorded in the Gospels? He never mentions any of His miracles, parables, words, or deeds. He mentions only two events in the life of our Lord—His Death and His Resurrection. And these two he mentions simply as great spiritual facts, without any one of those human details and circumstances upon which the sacred biographers lovingly linger.

#### HIS SILENCE ABOUT CHRIST'S HUMAN LIFE.

What is the meaning of St. Paul's astounding silence? As you and I attach so much importance to the Gospels, and cherish so tenderly and lovingly every detail of the life of Christ with which we are familiar, dwelling upon it again and again and again, it is a subject for remark that St. Paul never said anything about them. His silence—for, of course, he must have been perfectly familiar with all these details—his silence teaches us even more significantly than his speech, that the essence of the Gospel, the good news from God, lies far below the mere details, incomparable as they are, of the human life of our Lord during the thirty-three years He spent in the flesh. You and I are particularly interested in this remarkable feature of St. Paul's experience, for we are like him. We are not like St. Peter, who was a disciple from the beginning; not like St. James, who was His own brother and had gone to school with Him. We are not like St. John, who had leaned upon His Divine breast. No. We never met Christ, we never heard His loving voice. We never saw that glorious face. We are like St. Paul, we never knew Christ after the flesh. And in moments of weakness we may have been apt to lament very bitterly that we did not know Him, though there is no reason to believe that if we had we should have believed Him more eagerly than those who did know Him and crucified Him. St. Paul declares that you and I are under

#### NO DISADVANTAGE AT ALL,

because we never knew our Lord after the flesh. For we may have an immeasurably better knowledge of Him. We may know

Him as St. Paul himself knew Him, in the deepest sense of the word, better than any one else, except St. John. How did he know Him? His knowledge is expressed in that ever-memorable phrase, which is one of the most striking utterances even of this striking writer. You will remember how he describes the crisis, the revolution, the new departure in his life. He says: "It was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his son in me." Not outside of me, but *in* me. O, what does that mean? It means that there are two totally different ways of contemplating Jesus Christ. We may think of Him as the wondrous One, the mightiest of the mighty, who lived in Palestine for thirty-three years twenty centuries ago. We may think, as I have said, using the words of this Apostle, of what was "seen and temporal" in the Blessed One. Or we may think of what was "unseen and eternal," as true to-day as it ever was. We may dwell on the known incidents of that lovely life just as we might dwell upon Plato's incomparable account of the trial and death of Socrates. Any such study of the mere fragmentary history of the beautiful incidents in the human life of our Lord is as inspiring as it is ennobling. But it is outside of us. It is far away from us. It does not stir the depths of our being.

#### TWO VIEWS OF CHRIST.

Or, on the other hand, we may think of Jesus Christ in a totally different way, in the way in which every one, if his life is to be real, must think of Him, in the way in which St. Paul thought of Him. We may think of Him as the Risen Christ, the Living Christ, the Christ in whom we all at this very moment live and move and have our being; the Christ who is literally in every one of us. For He is in every man and in every woman. This, indeed, is what St. Paul, called "my Gospel"—the Gospel which God sent to him by revelation, the Gospel which he was better qualified to propound, because he was not confused by any knowledge of Christ after the flesh. This, indeed, is the great mystery which God has hid for generations, but which at last He revealed to St. Paul, and through St. Paul to us, "Christ in us the hope of glory." Not merely dying for us, living at a great distance from us, in space and time, but Christ in us—the ground of our true hope, the source of all real glory. Now see how this truth may affect us. A lady recently came to one of the Sisters, gifted and privileged, but restless, eager, longing for repose and for a noble career. But she said, "You must not talk to me about Christianity, it is meaningless. Christians are inconsistent and unreal." That might seem to some a very great predicament. What could be done with a gifted and privileged lady who declines to discuss Christianity with you because it is meaningless, and because so many Christians are humbugs? I hope that every lady who comes to me will come in that state of mind. I hope that every man will

come to me in that way. It will be a great relief. The world this moment is ignorant of Christ, because it wastes its time in speaking about Christians and Christianity. As if there were anything worth talking about except Christ! To any such person I should be overjoyed to say, "I am only too thankful to observe the limits of conversation you have so wisely imposed. God forbid that I should waste your time in

#### GOSSIPING ABOUT CHRISTIANS.

But I am quite unable to talk about you unless I talk about Christ, for you are unaccountable without Christ. I cannot separate you from Christ; I cannot think of you apart from Christ." Let me illustrate it in this way. Some time ago Professor Adams, the great astronomer, discovered that Uranus was not moving as it ought to move. It would not obey the law of gravitation. It was agitated; it was moving out of its proper orbit. What did it mean? There must be some reason for its disturbance. There must be some other planet attracting it. So he said, "Look into another part of the heavens, and you will see that there is a great unknown planet attracting this known planet out of its course." They did so, and the strange, eccentric restlessness of Uranus was accounted for by the fact that it was under the influence of the then unknown planet Neptune. It would be absurd for any one to say to me, "I want you to account for the strange movements of the planet Uranus, but you must not talk about Neptune." I should say, "My dear sir, it is useless for me to talk about Uranus unless I can speak about Neptune which attracts it." In precisely the same way your restlessness, your agitation, your strange conduct which really perplexes you, cannot be accounted for unless you will allow me to name the name of Christ, who Himself said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." As that divine gravitation is attracting you a good deal I cannot account for you unless I mention it. Your thirst for true goodness is not self-originated. Christ is agitating you. Christ, indeed, is in you, bringing you to Himself, as He is in every man. Even a heathen writer like Xenophon long ago described this mystery, saying, "I feel as if I had two souls." Plato, too, describes the human soul as a chariot drawn by two horses. There seemed to be two influences dragging in opposite directions—a worse self and what we call a better self. That better self is Christ. St. Paul himself was amazed and perplexed and agitated, and said, What is the matter with me? I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews. I have kept all the Law, and yet I am as wretched as I can be. Then he discovered that it was Christ who made him wretched. At last, he said, "It pleased God to reveal Himself in me. Then I realized that there could be no happiness for me until I submitted to the Divine Saviour. Thank God, I did not know Him after the flesh, for I

might then have been prevented from knowing as I know now, that He is the great light of God who lighteth every man that cometh into the world." On one occasion, during the wars of the first Napoleon, a devoted French officer was wounded in the region of the heart. As one of the military doctors was performing an operation, causing him great pain, he called out, "Cut deep enough, and you will find the Emperor." And we might say, in a better sense, cut deep enough into the heart of any human being and you will find Christ. So near to man is Christ. Christ is in you the hope of glory.

## BEFORE THE SUMMER.

Now let us take a totally different case. Not a gifted woman, restless, eager, dissatisfied, longing for some unattained good; but an absolutely agnostic man, who declares that he never felt the least religiousemotion, a man of high character and very scrupulous conscience. You say to me, how do you reconcile that case with your theory of Christ being in the heart of every man? Quite easily. If in mid-winter you wander with me into the wood, would you say it was dead? Not a leaf, not a bud, not a blade of grass. But you are not deceived by the superficial appearance. You wait for the sunshine and the rain, and you shall see the summer. And in the case of this agnostic, wait until your Father in Heaven has sent him the sunshine of His love and the rain of His grace, and you shall find strange stirrings in the depths of his soul, for Christ is in him, as He is in all of us. Of him we may say as Christ said of those called physically dead, "He is not dead, but sleepeth." This is indeed what St. Paul meant in the first part of my text where he says, "We henceforth know no man after the flesh." He not only refused to know Christ after the flesh, but he refused to know anybody else after the flesh. He could not think of any man apart from the Divine Christ. He never thought of any man without realizing that Christ was in every man. As I look around this crowded audience to-night, and see men and women whose names and histories I do not know, I am buoyed up by the delicious revelation that St. Paul has made to me. You are not a mere man or woman to me. You are men and women redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. You are human beings dear to God, dearer than you are to yourself or anybody else. No one person in this Hall is what he would have been if Christ had not died, and if He had not become bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He has come, and your whole condition is changed. Christ is more nearly related to you at this moment than your father Adam. Why are you restless? Why are you dissatisfied? Why are you disappointed and full of doubt? Because you have never realized that Christ is in you. You must not be misled by other aspects of truth with which we deal in this Hall. I often say, Come to Christ,

and there is a sense in which you must come. But you could not come unless Christ had already come to you. "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," says Christ. Certainly you are all elected of divine grace. But whether that becomes effective depends upon

YOUR DECISION,

upon your co-operation with God. God loves you all. He desires to save you all. Jesus Christ is in every one of you at this moment. It is impossible to give a scientific and exhaustive analysis of any one of you without including Christ. He is nearer to you at this moment than the person who sits next to you. I often invite persons to come to the inquiry-room, because it is encouraging to others, and it enables us to speak to them. But let no man make any mistake. Jesus Christ is no more in the inquiry-room than He is here. You take Christ with you. He cannot be nearer to you than He is at this moment. You are an altogether unaccountable person until you take Christ into the account. There are, I apprehend, few people here like that agnostic of whom I have spoken. But there are those who have intensely desired to trust in Christ. That desire did not originate in your own soul. Apart from Christ you are unaccountable. It is a sign of His nearness. You remember how Robinson Crusoe thought that he was on a lonely island. But one day he saw a foot-print in the sand, and to his astonishment he was not alone. And you find the print of a foot in your soul. It is the print of the foot that was crucified on the cross. You are not alone in that solitary island of your innermost soul. Christ is there to destroy the power of sin, and to make you like Himself. How many are disposed to say, like the woman of Samaria when she was faced by theological and ecclesiastical controversies, "I know that Messias cometh; when he has come he will declare unto us all things." But the words were no sooner out of her mouth than the unknown stranger said, "I that speak unto thee am he." And the day will come when He will so reveal Himself to you as He revealed Himself to St. Paul. My brother, my sister, the day has come now, if you will but listen. The voice which awakens the dead is speaking to you. Rise, and He will give you light.

## THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

BY PROF. JAMES STALKER, D.D.

*“The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”—Acts xi. 26.*

“**T**HE disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” And what were they called before that? It was nearly twenty years after the commencement of the Christian movement before this name was invented, and the followers of Christ must during these twenty years have had names by which they were called among one another. What were these names? Our text mentions one of them: it says “*The disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch.” They were therefore called disciples before they received the name of Christians. This seems to have been the very first name given to the followers of Christ. It is the name we meet with continually in the Gospels, where it is applied not only to the twelve Apostles, but to all those who in any measure came under the influence of Christ. You know what it means: it means learners or scholars. They were learners, He their Teacher. One of the characters in which our Lord appeared on earth was that of a religious teacher, who gave utterance to thoughts of extraordinary originality; and those who followed Him for the purpose of hearing His teaching were called His disciples. This is still a mark of His true followers—they are learners. Their intellect is awake, and it is interested in such subjects as Jesus came into the world to speak about—God and the soul, sin and salvation and eternity. Many persons feel such subjects to be wearisome and intolerable. They may be intellectually awake in regard to other subjects, such as business or news, literature or art; or they may be intellectually asleep, caring for no serious thing, but only for food, dress, and amusement. But Christ’s followers are keenly interested in the highest subjects, and one of their chief desires in life is to learn about them. Hence you find them where He is speaking. He speaks in the Bible, and therefore they diligently read it; He speaks through preaching in the house of God, and therefore they wait on it. People who have no taste this way wonder how they can have such an appetite for sermons and prayer-meetings and Bible-readings. It is because they are disciples. But the relation of discipleship implied more than mere learning. Disciple is a manlier name than scholar or pupil. We do not speak of the disciples of a schoolmaster, but of the disciples of a thinker or philosopher. Those, for example, who were the disciples of Socrates or Plato frequented those great teachers, not so much for the purpose of acquiring knowledge or learning a system,

as for the inspiration that is received from contact with an original mind. It is good to be near a big soul ; there is nothing better than to feel the pressure of a noble character. It was this that attracted to Socrates the youth of Athens ; and Plato's regular name for this teacher's disciples is "those about Socrates." They were near him because from their vicinity to him they found mental and moral stimulus. This, too, was the secret of Jesus ; and this is what it means to be a disciple of Christ—it is to be "one of those about Him." Those who got near Him said to each other, "It is good for us to be here." Unawares and by mere daily contact with Him, somewhat of a largeness and repose of His nature passed into theirs. And this is still the highest blessing of discipleship ; it is to be one of those about Jesus, on whom His character impresses itself almost imperceptibly ; and who, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.

Another name that was given to the followers of Christ before they were called Christians was *Brethren*. As soon as you read through the Gospels and get into the Acts of the Apostles, this is the name you meet with everywhere—Brethren. As long as the Master was present the name that prevailed was the one that expressed their immediate relation to Him ; but when He had departed and they were left to themselves, they began to use the name that expressed their relation to one another. Brethren are of course literally the sons of the same father ; and this tie of nature is a very strong one. In favorable circumstances the heart of one brother will melt or leap at the sorrow or joy of another. And even in unfavorable cases, brothers who fall out among themselves will rally to one another's aid against a common foe. If even a prodigal standing at a man's door can say, "I am your brother," it is a rare hardheartedness which can altogether refuse to acknowledge his claim. But outside the circle of the family it is difficult to get men to acknowledge the claims of their fellow-men on their love and help. We may all, indeed, be said to be brothers, for we are the children of one father, Adam, whose blood flows in the veins of us all. But this relationship is too remote and far-derived to produce the sense of obligation in the majority, and it has not prevented the hatreds, feuds, neglect and selfishness which have harried this poor earth. Many attempts have therefore been made to make men feel more kindly to one another by forging new bonds of connection among them, and men have called each other brethren because of these relationships. But in comparison with the tie of blood most of these relationships have been but figures of speech, and they have practically exerted on other men's conduct only the amount of influence that may reside in figures of speech. But when the early Christians called each other brethren, it was no mere figure of speech. The word had a fact behind it ; a common life derived from the same source was in them ; not, indeed, a life in the body and the

blood, derived from generation, but a life in their spirits, communicated by regeneration. This is the foundation of the love between Christians—it rests on a life which is common to them and derived from the same Father; and where this life is real, natural, and healthy, it will produce tenderness of feeling, sense of obligation, and the offices of love, as certainly as the blood of a common fatherhood unites those who are brothers in the flesh.

As I have mentioned these two synonyms of the name Christian, which prevailed before it, I may mention also the two others which occur most frequently in the New Testament, although perhaps they came into vogue subsequently to the invention of the name Christian.

When we get out of the Acts of the Apostles and into the Epistles of Paul we come pretty often on the name *Believers*. This is a name which we should almost have expected St. Paul to use, for the word believer means one who has faith, and Paul was the Apostle of faith. It may be said to have been the work of his life to set forth the nature and the virtues of faith. This feature of his labors was grounded deep in his experience. As Luther said of himself that if ever poor monk had tried with all his might to be saved by works, he was that monk, so St. Paul might have said, that if ever human being had tried to be saved by works, he was that man. But what works had failed to do for him, faith had done; it had brought into his rejoicing soul the righteousness of God. Thenceforth he became the herald of faith, and it was not strange that he should fix upon this as the distinguishing mark of those who were really Christ's. But, though we thus associate faith with the preaching of St. Paul, it was not one whit less prominent in the preaching of Christ Himself. Faith was what He demanded in all with whom He met; He hungered for faith as a lover hungers for love; when it was denied Him, He felt the keenest disappointment, and when it was forthcoming, He welcomed it with irrepressible joy. He came among men with infinitely greater pretensions and promises than anyone else has ever ventured to make, for He promised to save men from their sins. Some denied that He could do anything of the kind; others had no taste for the boon He came to offer. But those who credited His testimony, and acted accordingly, were believers. Jesus Christ is still going about through the world; He passes from town to town, from door to door; He comes to your door and mine; He offers to confer on us the greatest boon in existence—to save us from our sins and lead us back to God. Have you credited this offer and closed with it? This is what it is to be a believer.

There is another term which St. Paul uses still oftener than "believers" for the same purpose: it is the word *Saints*. Thus, in writing to the Romans, he addresses himself to the saints at Rome; and in the same way he commences both his Epistles to the

Corinthians, and the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians ; indeed, this name abounds in all his writings.

Saints are possessors of sanctity or holiness ; and this implies three things : (1) Separation. This is the first meaning of holiness in every part of Scripture—separation from the common or unclean. Saints are separate persons. This, too, was an obvious feature of the primitive Christians : they were clearly distinguished from the Jews, if they had previously been Jews, and from the heathen, if they had previously been heathen. Then (2) it implies purification. To separate one's self from others is an idle thing if it be a mere outward standing apart from them.

It requires something more inward to justify it ; and this second element is purification. It is because the followers of Christ have been purified from the sin of the world that they separate themselves from the world, so that they may be kept pure. But there is (3) Consecration : he who has been purified and separated from the world is sent back into it again, to be in it but not of it, to reform and elevate and sweeten it, to pervade it with the spirit of Christ, and help to rescue it from the dominion of the prince of this world and make it into the kingdom of God. All these elements are united in sainthood—separation, purification, consecration. But does it not astonish us that the name of saints should once have been given to all who named the name of Christ ? Saint was once a name convertible with member of the Church. Since then the word has experienced extraordinary vicissitudes. In the Church of Rome it is applied only to a few of the dead who have been deemed worthy of canonization ; and among Protestants it is rather a nickname than a name. There is many a member of the Church whose cheek would redden if he heard himself called a saint. Yet, if we had a church of saints ! A single saint—a Keble or a McCheyne—can make a whole denomination venerable. Of all the signs that mark the followers of Christ holiness is the most august. Even faith, even love itself perhaps, yields to it. Like a light that twinkles out over the waste of waters and tells the shipwrecked mariner to hope, so a single holy life assures hearts made sceptical by the worldliness of an unspiritual society that there still exists on earth the power of God. A single saint will fill a whole parish with belief in religion, as a grain of musk fills a room with its fragrance. I express only my own opinion when I say that in my belief a saint, the humblest saint, is more precious to the Church of God than ecclesiastic, orator, or scholar.

Such then were the names for members of the Church which prevailed in New Testament times—disciples, brethren, believers, saints. But our text commemorates the invention of the name which was destined to overtop them all. In every clime to which the Gospel of Christ has penetrated, *Christian* has come to be the standing name for a follower of Him.

In view of its universal adoption, it is singular to note that it

was not originally invented by the Christians themselves, and did not for many years after its invention come into common use among them. It occurs only thrice in the New Testament; and if the three passages are looked at, it will be seen that in everyone of them it is applied to Christians by non-Christians. In fact, it seems at first to have been a byword or nickname flung as a term of reproach at the followers of Christ. To this day, strange to say, the name constructed from the other commonest name of the Saviour remains a term of reproach: the word Jesuit is derived from Jesus, as Christian is derived from Christ. But I suspect the name Jesuit will long continue a term of reproach. The name of Christian has had a happier fate. For although originally intended as a term of reproach, after a time the followers of Christ adopted it as their own. It is not the only instance in history in which a name, thrown by opponents as a missile, has been laid hold of by those at whom it has been flung, and borne aloft as the sign beneath which they have fought, or pinned over the heart as the badge of honor.

In the very circumstances of this name's bestowal, indeed, there may seem to have lain a prophecy of its universal diffusion.

"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." Now, what was Antioch? Antioch, a city of a million inhabitants on the Orontes, on the north-east angle of the Mediterranean, was in those days the common mart where East and West met; and in its gay streets representatives elbowed one another of every nation under heaven. The Roman ruled it, the Greek directed its commerce and the Jews' synagogue had its modest place among its temples. A name originated in Antioch might easily be blown over the earth.

Still more clearly did such a prophecy seem to lie in the structure of the word, in which scholars can even at this day trace its origin. It certainly did not come from the Jews, for the idea of the Christ embodied in it was to them too sacred to be put into a nickname, or connected with a sect they hated. Their name for Christ's followers was Nazarenes, a word derived from Nazareth, out of which, according to their proverb, no good thing could come. Yet there was a Jewish element in the name, for it was in Israel that the great hope of the Christ arose. There was a Greek element in it too, for the Jewish term Messiah had to be translated into Greek, the universal language of the ancient world, before this new name was coined out of it, the Greek Christos being the equivalent of the Hebrew word which we call Messiah. And there is a Roman element in it also, for the word Christian, whilst having a Greek root, has a Roman ending. In fact, we may guess that it was invented by a Greek-speaking Roman, who in some gay moment rolled it with a laugh out of his mouth, to characterize the strange new Jewish sect that was making a stir in the city. But little did he imagine how long this child of his lips would live, and

how far it would travel—far beyond where Rome's eagles ever flew. Thus, just as the inscription in Hebrew and Greek and Latin on the cross of Christ was an unconscious prophecy of the universal significance of what was being transacted on the tree to which it was affixed, so the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin elements in the word Christians may seem to have foretold its universal use. But it has owed its universal diffusion chiefly to the fact that it is a better name than any one of those which precede it. It touches the quick more. It emphasises what is most central and vital in all other names. Are Christians disciples or students of religious truth? The name Christian emphasizes the fact that Christ is the centre of all religious truth. Are they brethren? It shows that they are connected with one another only by being first connected with Him. Are they believers? He is the prime object of faith. Are they saints? Likeness to Him is the standard of sanctity, and union to Him its source. Thus this name includes all the rest, and besides, it contains the name that is above every name.

Yet the older names are not useless, though they have been obscured by the new one. They help to define it, for its very universality tends to make it vague and shallow. Who deserves the name of Christian? What is a Christian? He is a disciple: unless he keeps company with Christ, receiving the impression of His influence and imbibing His ideas, he has no right to the Christian name. He is a brother: if he does not love those who love Christ and help them as he finds opportunity, he is worse than an infidel, for he is wearing a badge he has no right to. He is a believer: he has accepted the testimony borne to Christ, and received Him as his all in all. He is a saint: if the beginnings at least of holiness are not in him, if he is not different from the world and growing like to Christ, he has no right to be called a Christian. Christian is both the widest and the narrowest, the most charitable and the most testing of all the designations borne by the professed follower of Christ. It is wider than all our denominational names—Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Presbyterian, Independent—it includes them all. Yet it is narrower than any of them, for many who bear these names have no title to it. John Wesley is said once in a dream to have found himself at the gate of the place of woe, through which multitudes were passing, and he asked the porter who they were. Were there Catholics going in there? Plenty of them. Were there Protestants? Plenty of them. Were there Presbyterians? Plenty of them. Were there Baptists? Plenty of them. Were there Wesleyans? Plenty of them. Then, in his dream, he was suddenly at the gate of Heaven, and when he asked the porter earnestly: Are there many Wesleyans inside? Not one. What! Are there many Baptists? Not one. Who then, Presbyterians? Not one. Catholics? Not one. Then who are inside? Only Christians.

Let us try ourselves by these names to-night. Most of us here

are members of the Church, and are called by the name of the denomination to which we belong, and perhaps we are proud of it. But what about these older names? Are we disciples, thirsting for the truth as it is in Jesus, living with Christ and learning of Him? Are we brethren, purged of selfishness, greed, gossip and injustice, and willingly spending and being spent for the common good; filled with love to all who love the Lord? Are we believers, making the fulness that is in Christ daily more and more our own? Are we saints, so shedding abroad the gentleness and purity of Jesus that others take knowledge of us that we have been with Him? Are we Christians? What is your answer? My answer is this: Oh for more of the disciple's love of truth, more of the love of the brethren, more of the faith of the believer, more of the holiness of the saint; oh for more, far more, of Christ.

## A LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN.

BY JOHN HALL, D.D., LL.D.

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*“In the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.”*

—REVELATION v. 6.

Did it ever occur to you, dear friends, that there is a wonderfully beautiful fitness in the Book of Revelation coming at the close of the New Testament? It is quite true that there is a great deal in that book that is difficult and mysterious, but it is also quite true that it gives us a very vivid and distinct impression of what will be in the end the triumph of the kingdom of our blessed Saviour. Now, remember that the Church at this time was a mere handful of comparatively humble and often persecuted believers. The world was against it. The powers of the world were opposed to it. And the question must often have come to any thoughtful and intelligent believer: What is the end to be of this Messianic struggle? What will come of this new party? What is the future of this Church to be? Is it to be only for a little while the world's wonder and then to pass away, or is it to be an abiding, living force, that is to continue in the world and to be a blessing to great multitudes of the race? That question is answered in the Book of Revelation; and although you can point to chapters, and visions, and vivid descriptions, the precise and exact meaning of which will not be clearly seen until prophecy has been fulfilled, nevertheless, an impression of hope and of joyful confidence is made upon the mind of any devout and careful reader.

It was eminently fit that the New Testament should close with a book like the Book of Revelation. There is a second element of fitness about this peculiar part of the book that I should like you to think of for a moment. You know the structure of it. In the opening part of the book the Apostle John is directed to write letters to the Seven Churches, giving them encouragement, warning, instruction, and help, sometimes reproof and rebuke, as they needed. So far his eyes are turned to the earth and the sections of the Church of Jesus Christ here on the earth. When that has been done the vision expands. A door is opened in Heaven, and his eye looks toward the eternal world, and pictures of the most impressive and striking character are seen by him, and their features reported for our benefit.

In the chapter immediately preceding that from which the

text is taken there is a most lively representation of the Ruler of the universe. The heathen had their lords many and gods many, and Gentile believers had come away from their beliefs, and they needed to be instructed as to the real Ruler of this universe. And so the throne in Heaven, and He who sits upon the throne, are presented in vision to John. There is no such description of Him who occupies this throne as a painter could reproduce on his canvas, as a sculptor could bring to us in marble. There is no temptation to men to break the commandment and try to make an image of the Supreme; but there is such a manifestation of His power, majesty, dignity, and glory, owned by the innumerable company of angels, as may well leave the impression upon men that the earth and the things of it are under wise control, that God is over all, that nothing in His Church and nothing in the world can transpire but by His favor, and according to His holy will. He is able to rule, able to control, able to manage, able to carry out His holy and gracious will. That is acknowledged by His Church above, the members of which have never sinned, the angels that are round about Him; and it is acknowledged by the Church below, the Church militant, represented in the living creatures, where the strength and patience of the ox, the courage of the lion, the soaring powers of the eagle, and the wisdom of man will represent the characteristics that ought to belong to the Church on earth and to the officers of that Church. This is Jehovah, the Ruler of the universe, as He is the maker of it; He is over all. Let these local deities, these heathen conceptions of power pass away. Earth and sky and the whole universe God rules, and God is to be obeyed.

Well, but is it enough for Christian people that they have this understanding of Jehovah as the Ruler of the universe? Will it be enough for you and me, sinful creatures, to know that infinite Power and Wisdom control all things? No. We need something more than that, if our hearts are to be comforted, and our natures regenerated, and accordingly we have the vivid pictures presented in the chapter from which the text is taken. In the hand of Him that is upon the throne is a book written within and without, and sealed—God's will known to Him, and complete, and unknown to His creatures. Now, who can open this book? Who can know His will? Who can administer the affairs of this lower world with which we, the human race, have to deal? Can any of these angels? No. Can the living creatures? No. In the universe anywhere, is there any creature that can take this book from the Ruler's hand and administer the affairs according to His holy will? None appears. None answers to the appeal. And John weeps. Is the curtain to fall? Is he to see no more of these heavenly visions? Is he to get no further light touching the great questions that have been raised? No wonder he weeps; but he is comforted. Oh,

yes, there is One who can open the book. There is One who can dispense and execute the Father's will. There is One who can manage this fallen world for the benefit of the fallen human race; and that one is seen in the text--a lamb, with traces of having been slain patent to the eye. He can take the book, He can loose the seals, He can carry out the will of the Lord our Creator, the Lord of the universe.

Now, let us do as John did, let us contemplate Him, let us study this Lamb on the throne, in the midst of the throne, the Lamb that had been slain taking the book and unloosing its seals.

First of all, you have to think of the description that is given of Him—a Lamb. Well, you cannot know your New Testament without understanding the reference: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That was Jesus of Nazareth. You cannot read the Old Testament without understanding the same thing clearly: "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter." That also is Jesus of Nazareth. There is a fitness in His being presented as a Lamb, in His own personal character. You do not need to be told about His meekness and gentleness. You have only to listen to His words: "Come unto me; I will give you rest. I am meek and lowly." You have only to watch His deeds. There are the tears flowing from His eyes by the grave of Lazarus. There He is weeping over the future fall of Jerusalem. There He is restoring Peter. There He is doing deeds of gentleness and compassion upon every hand. He is the Lamb of God—gentle, patient, submissive, meek and lowly. He is the Lamb of God's providing. "God so loved the world" that He sent Him, and made Him in His true and perfect humanity allied to deity, the Lamb that could take away the sin of the world. Morning sacrifices, passover lambs, these and kindred institutions of the Old Testament all point in the same direction to the Lamb of God. But there is more than meekness about Him. There is innocence, there is sinlessness, so that He is fitted to be a sacrifice. You turn your gaze to Paradise—there is the angel, there is the flaming sword. If anyone presents himself that is not sinless and innocent—no admission. You and I are not admissible. Here is One who is sinless, who is holy, who can stand for us, who can bear our sins; and when we are accepted in Him, pardoned for His sake, then we can enter through Him the open door, we can enter into the paradise of God. Dear friends, think of this Lamb of God, meek in character, sinless in nature, and so fitted to be in our room, and fitted to be a sacrifice—the one sacrifice, the antitype of all typical rites, the one Maker of the Atonement, the God-given Redeemer and substitute for us, the Lamb of God.

Now, the second head of discourse is this—and I want to put it so that even the children can remember it—this Lamb slain—this Lamb slain, even yonder in Heaven, in the vision of the Apostle bearing traces of having been slain. Now, use your judgment for

a moment about this—angels and the human race, two sets of rational beings of whose existence we know: there are two ways that you can think of in which a governing body can deal with rational beings. You can deal with them one by one, or they can be dealt with as a community. God deals with angels one by one. The angels are not a race. Like the trees of the forest, each one stands upon its own root. The angel that sins, that angel goes down. They are dealt with as individuals. Now, I am not discussing the matter here that the theologians have to deal with, but I feel thankful to God after all, and with all that capacity in the other direction, I feel thankful that we belong to a race. Christ took not on Him the nature of angels. We are a race, and are dealt with as a community. We stood in the first Adam, and he sinned. Christ is the second Adam, and we can stand in Him and be saved; and there is the philosophy of the Lamb slain. He came that He might undo what the first representative did. He came that He might stand for His people, that He might be in their room. He is slain, for the wages of sin is death. He is slain, for the law was broken, and He magnifies it. He is slain, because there was a penalty, and before angels and principalities and powers God is to be seen as forgiving for cause, and that cause is the atoning death of the Lamb of God.

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life.” That is a familiar text. Look unto the meaning of it, and below the surface. The world is like a great house, with vessels to honor and vessels unto dishonor. He loves it as His great house, but let it be your care, dear friends, that you be not the vessels to dishonor. The world is like a net with a multitude of fishes, some good and some bad, and in that aspect of it He loves the world; but take care that you are not of the bad fishes—of the bad fishes that shall be cast out. The world is like a heap of grain on the threshing floor, wheat in it and chaff in it. In this aspect of it God loves the world, but take care that you are not the chaff, for the chaff shall be burned with unquenchable fire. And the way to be wheat, to be good fish, to be vessels to honor is to be in the Lamb slain, trusting Him, loving Him, leaning on Him, making His atoning work the exclusive basis of faith and hope—the Lamb slain. You remember the touching—one might say startling—circumstances in which He was slain—Jews calling out for His execution, heathen judges giving the sentence, soldiers mocking, chief priests sneering, disciples terrified and afraid; Jesus crying, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” and by and by committing His spirit to God and giving up the ghost. Oh, how touching it is! You cannot read it and forget it. It is the priest offering the one victim, and He is the Victim Himself. It is the High Priest presenting the one sacrifice, and He is the sacrifice. It is the Son of God giving Himself a ransom for the

redeemed. The Lamb slain, even on the throne, to St. John's eyes, bears traces of that one completed atoning work that He does when by one sacrifice of Himself He brings in eternal redemption. Let your minds dwell upon this. There is a great deal about the birth of Jesus, with the shepherds and the angels' song and the phenomena that impressed the senses, to interest us. There is a great deal about the life of Jesus, in its sinlessness and in its beauty, to interest. There is a great deal about the teaching of Jesus, that revolutionized the thinking of the world to command our admiration. But oh, my brethren, it is not His birth, nor His example, nor His teaching that is the direct instrument of saving. It is His dying on the accursed tree. Keep this in mind. There are writers, more or less intelligent, who claim to be particularly liberal and broad, and who will magnify the wonderful truths that Jesus Christ has taught to men, and who will dwell upon the beautiful example He has set, and convey the notion that when we appreciate the truths, and in some degree follow in the steps of His perfect example, that is all that is needed. It is not so in the Bible. It magnifies His teaching and applauds His example—we never can say too much in praise of one or the other—but we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Keep that in your thoughts. And there it is that His holiness comes up again. He Himself recalls it. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." The devils even acknowledge His sinlessness. Grander still, God testifies to it: "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This sinless one can bear sin, and, being the Son of God, He has a right, if He pleases, to take the sin upon Him, and die for it, and this He has done. Blessed be His name, blessed be His name, "the Lamb slain" that we might have forgiveness.

Now, here is the third head—the Lamb slain on the throne. The Lamb slain on the throne—a curious combination this, somebody may say. In one breath the preacher tells us about Christ as a victim, Christ as a priest; in the next breath he tells us about this same crucified One as on the throne. Yes, it is a strange combination. Man never could have made it. Human intellect never could have originated it. And after all, it is not a mere New Testament doctrine—still less a mere doctrine of the Revelation. It is an Old Testament doctrine. It is as old as Genesis. What is the meaning of Melchizedek, Priest and King, and so a type of this Jesus? What is the meaning of the prophet's utterance (Zachariah's), "He shall be a priest upon his throne"? This is exactly what is here, a lamb slain in the midst of the throne. Why should He be there? Why? He has redeemed the world. Who so fit to take care of it? He has suffered for it. Who so fit to administer the affairs of the race? He has rescued earth from wrath and ruin. Who so fit to manage its interests for the sake of carrying out the Father's will and executing His gracious purposes? And that is the reason that He says, "All power is given unto me in heaven

and on earth." As the son of God He had all power, as the Mediator it is given to Him in heaven and on earth. He is the Lamb now on the throne, in the midst of the throne, able to take the book, unloose its seals, understand the Father's will, see that it is carried out. Is that a mere abstract truth, or is it something, dear friends, affecting both you and me? Why, certainly the latter. Oh, how thankful we ought to be that we have our Saviour, our Brother, our High Priest on the throne. A great deal is said and written now about Nature, and the laws of nature, some of it nonsense, I am sorry to say. I heard the other day of a brilliant man giving out what would be a popular platitude about the Fatherhood of God, the motherhood of nature, and the brotherhood of man. It sounds fine: it is silly. What is nature but a general name for God's works and the laws that rule? It is not nature that administers the affairs of this globe. It is He who sits upon the throne. Nature is impersonal. Nature is senseless. Nature is without reason. Nature has no power of judging and discriminating. A loving, divine, glorified person is on the throne, and He controls and rules. Let us be thankful. Was it not well for Lot that Abraham could extemporize an army, and so effect his deliverance? Was not it well for the sons of Jacob when they went down to Egypt, that Joseph was in power there? And, oh! believer, lonely believer, tempted believer, afflicted believer, struggling believer; is it not well for you that your Lord and Saviour is on the throne? He can manage for you—He can make all things work together for your good. Trust Him, and love Him, and cleave to Him as long as you live.

Now I come to the fourth head, and upon that it is unnecessary to speak very much—the Lamb slain standing in the midst of the throne. Fourteen or fifteen times in the Scriptures Christ is connected in this way with the throne. But this picture, standing, is peculiar. It is here and in one other place. Here, very fitly, standing is the attitude of activity. The man of duty, the man who has to do things, the man who has to put his strength into things, stands up. Christ is Mediator, He is High Priest still, He ever liveth to make intercession. He is Prophet still, He is teaching all His people. He is King, He is standing, nothing escapes His vision. His hand can reach out and touch everything that needs to be touched. Look to this standing Christ. You have nothing to fear if He will only guard and guide you. But there is another picture of Him in the same way, standing. It is presented to the eye of the dying martyr Stephen, who was the first. There has been a long succession since. Perhaps it was fitting that to the first martyr there should be such obvious and palpable encouragement. He saw Heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing—you rise up to welcome your friends, you advance and take them by the hand—the Son of Man standing to receive, to welcome the

spirit of His faithful servant into the land of glory. Don't be afraid to die, believer—don't be afraid to die, if that Lamb slain in the midst of the throne only welcomes you. What have you to fear? What have you to fear? And He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.

Now I leave this truth with you. It would be easy to make many applications. Truly there is no need. You can make the application. You can take this picture with its four sides—the Lamb, the Lamb slain, the Lamb slain on the throne, the Lamb slain standing in the midst of the throne. You can study it yourself, and the more you study it, the more wonderful, the more lovely it will appear to you. God help you to study it, and then to run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus! May God bless His word, and to His name be the praise. Amen.

## A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

BY THE REV. MARK GUY PEARSE.

*“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great the things the Lord hath done for thee.”*—ST. MARK v. 19.

JESUS CHRIST had crossed the Lake of Galilee and landed on the other side. Here was a man possessed of many devils, so fierce that no power could restrain him. But as Jesus comes near He stands and commands the devils to come out of him. And they come out the same hour. The man, dreading perhaps what should befall him, begged that he might stay with Jesus. Meanwhile the people had come out and in great fear had besought Jesus to depart from their coasts. The Lord sends this man to tell them what things He had done for him. When next Jesus came a very different reception awaited Him; this man seems to have opened up the whole country to receive Him. *“Go home to thy friends and tell them.”* So he had a home and friends, this man of whom we read that he had his dwelling in the tombs and caves, cutting himself with stones. Think of that home away in the little village, think of the friends; think of his wife; of his children; think of the poor old mother who sat fretting about him day and night. Ah, there are a thousand things worse than death. He who had loved wife and children so well, he who had been so good a son, and in whom the old mother had such pride, now possessed of devils, making day and night hideous with his cries, rushing madly hither and thither with the clanking chains! What a grief it is for the wife to speak of him! How she trembles for the children. How when the night winds blow she thinks she hears the madman at the door! Pity for him there might be, yet the very pity is almost lost in fear.

And now one day the little lad bursts in with the tidings, “Father is coming.” The mother makes fast the door, and gathers the children about her and waits terrified. The old mother in the corner gasps with horror. There is a knock at the door, not the fierce and threatening summons that they dreaded, but a voice that seemed to come out of the past spake to them, “Open, open, and let me in.” Timidly they open the door, and he comes within. “Jesus of Nazareth has made me whole,” he cries. The mother stretches forth her arms to greet him, the wife and children cling about him. “Tell us,” they cry, “all about it.” “I scarcely know myself, only that He spake and the foul things were gone, and, lo! I was in my right mind. At first I was afraid to leave Him lest the evil spirit should return, but He told me to come home and tell you all about it.” “Praise His name,” they cry, and Heaven came down to that house and stayed there.

*This is what Jesus Christ came into the world to do, to cast out the devils that separate men and that snap the bonds of brotherhood;*

to make hearts one again, and to make home blessed. This is no bit of the dead past, no strange story coming down through the ages, full of old-time notions. It lives in our midst to-day. All about us at this hour are men who could love, who could bless and brighten homes, but, alas! they are possessed of devils. What homes are darkened, what lives are crushed, what hearts are broken! They who should be dearest are a terror, and a terror most of all to those who should be dearest to them. How many are there in this great London—men and women too—possessed with the devil of drink, for whom some old mother down in the country is breaking her heart, for whom night and morning a prayer is made with tears, and for whom there rises many times a day a sigh to Heaven? I see the little cottage; the roses grow about it, but the cheeks are white and sad; in the garden the flowers bloom, but the heart is withered.

The Almighty Christ is come to cast out these devils. Thank God, many a man about us has been delivered by the Almighty Saviour, and homes have been turned from hell to Heaven. Is the word meant for some one here? Has God guided your steps within reach of Jesus Christ? Think if He spake this word to you this day, “Go home to thy friends.” How blessed were it if this miserable separation were ended, for that He has cast out the devil of bitterness, or that He has broken the chains of your curse. What a happy Christmas should be yours! What a glad New Year! Cast yourself to-day at His feet and entreat Him. One of the best men I know told me that one Christmas Eve he had gone into a public-house drunk, when the door of the parlor opened, and he saw the children round the fireplace merry with Christmas presents. He thought at once of his own children, and hurried back to find the wretched wife crying by a cheerless fire; and sitting on the bare floor, trying to amuse themselves with a broken toy, were his hungry little ones. As he came the children got up and crept frightened to their mother. That contrast broke his heart. He sat and wept in his miserable shame; then he kneeled and prayed with all his soul that God would help him. From that hour the maddening stuff has not passed his lips. When next the Christmas Day came it found a bright fireside, and the merry children laughed about him, and no home on earth was happier than his; and the happiness has lasted till this day. This is what Jesus has come for—to cast out devils, to make homes blest, to make friends glad in one another’s love. Would that we could speak it to the thousands in this great city for whom somebody is sorrowing, whose memory lies a curse over some home. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and that he hath had compassion on thee.” This is what the Lord is seeking for all men this day.

*Then there is what the Lord would have us do for Him. Perhaps there is no congregation in London where so large a number*

of young people gather as at these services. There are none to whom our heart goes out with more eager sympathy. I do with all my heart wish you a right merry Christmas. "Go home to thy friends." It sounds like a greeting from the blessed Master. Home, friends, happy gatherings, with these He would enrich the world, who comes to dwell among us in gracious brotherliness. Be sure that the blessed Master has not come to destroy any home joy, nor any glad festivity.

*Go home to thy friends.* The scene rises before us. Good is it to see the dear father and mother at the table, and about them the sons and daughters gathered from afar. These are sacred seasons; make much of them while you may. With some of us they are things of the past, and now we in turn have to greet the home-coming. I charge you, I pray you, whatever you do, do this for Jesus Christ's sake: fill up the days with such loving service as shall leave a glad memory for many a day to come. Give them at home as much time as you can. Think how much we owe them for those years of love and care and prayers. You must make haste and work hard if you would pay it back. Here, in the presence of the Lord Jesus, I pray you go home to your friends and show them the fruit of your religion, first of all in love and tender service such as shall keep the heart aglow until you come again. Put that first—you are a Christian, and are bound to carry home sunshine. It is love that made the first Christmas carol, and love alone can celebrate the coming of the Lord.

*Do not be afraid.* This man who was healed felt that he was safe as long as he could keep close to that side; in the shadow of that presence: His authority could keep him whole. But to go home alone when he himself had scarcely grown used to his new life, to raise the expectations of those at home, and then to become again a terror to them, and, perhaps worse, again to find himself the slave of those evil spirits—that was dreadful indeed. And would they receive him at home; would they not be afraid of him? Or the citizens might resent his presence because his healing had so interfered with their gains, and they might be ready to avenge the heavy loss of their swine. But when Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends," it was all right. It was a kind of guarantee for his safety. It was the assurance that the grace which had made him whole could keep him whole, as well at home as anywhere else. In many respects this case may illustrate your thoughts and fears. You used to be so different that you can scarcely expect them to have much confidence in you at first. Or they may resent your coming if you cannot do as they do. Do not be afraid; the religion of Jesus Christ is not a dainty thing that is fitted only for times and seasons where there is neither conflict nor storm. Not at all. He will go home with you; He will open your way; He will give you courage and wisdom, resoluteness and gentleness. Only take HIM every day as your Lord and Master, and give yourself up to Him

to be His faithful soldier and servant. Be thorough and be true to Him.

*Beware of the beginnings of sin.* Keep the temperance pledge: carry the blue ribbon. A bold avowal will silence temptation when a timid confession will invite discussion and perhaps angry argument. Do not confound innocent amusement with sin; on the other hand, do not confound sin with innocent amusement. Ask the Lord Jesus for the clear perception of His will in all things—of liberty, of duty, and of service. “Go home to thy friends, and *show* how great things God hath done for thee.” So the text reads in St. Luke. To *show* is often the best way to tell; and when the lips cannot find the opportunity the life can keep giving its testimony. This is what Jesus asks you to do for Him.

And, further, *tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee.* Do not think that means preaching, or bothering people at any time and in any way about religion. There are people whom I meet with sometimes who don’t do me any good at all; strangers who, abruptly and without and preface, demand in a peremptory voice a statement of my religious conviction. It is a kind of “Stand and deliver” that one resents. There is a sacredness and privacy about religion which the Lord recognizes when He bids us go and pray in our room with the door shut. A man can be a light of the world without being a policeman’s bull’s-eye flashing out upon the darkness—a glare that does not guide, but only blinds and bewilders. One may be the salt of the earth without giving people a mouthful unmixed, as if it were medicine. Salt may be a good thing by itself, but it is wonderful how a dish of something nice improves it. We read of Noah that, by faith, “being wary,” he provided an ark for the saving of his house. Let your faith make you wary in building the ark for the family. When you are seated about the fire begin to tell them about the London Mission; tell them what you think may interest them most; then go on to give them something of the sermon you heard, and let it lead up to the story of your conversion. If you can, get them then to have a hymn—an old hymn to an old tune, the mother’s favorite—and then a chapter, and then prayer. No matter how poor and stammering the petitions may be if only the heart speaks to God in real longing. The very simplicity of it will be its effectiveness. Perhaps the good folks at home will be so much interested that they may ask the neighbors in to hear it, and very likely you will have a great chance of usefulness. Only give yourself out and out to Jesus Christ, and take **Him** as your wisdom and strength.

But there is another fear that may suggest itself, and doubtless does: “I am myself so faulty and imperfect that I shrink from making any such profession.” Well, think how much the Lord has done for you, how “great things,” and “that he hath had compassion on thee.” Surely it is not a matter about which we can be silent, either through fear or shame. If you wait until you are

perfect before you bear your testimony for Jesus Christ you will wait a very long time ; and if you then begin to give your testimony because you think yourself perfect, it will not do imperfect people much good, for you will be altogether out of their reach. I don't want people who can fly to come down and teach me how to walk. I do not want to encourage imperfections, but I have found much help from the imperfections of good men. When a student our old professor of theology was a man for whom we had a great veneration—simple, childlike, holy—none had ever known him to be anything else, and that gracious and unfailing sweetness and beauty were to us his *natural* disposition. To such a man it was no trouble to be always blameless. But one day it chanced that a student came in late to the class, and pushed his way to his seat. The professor stopped to ask gently why he was late. The answer was given somewhat flippantly, an excuse that aggravated the offence. Instantly the professor, who had been sitting, rose to his full height, until the big, massive man seemed to fill the room, stretching out a trembling and terrible forefinger at the offender. The great shaggy eyebrows were lifted, and the lightnings shot from his eyes. Like thunder rolled the words from his lips, “Leave the room, sir.” We started in amazement, almost in fright. The culprit crouched away from his place, and left whilst that majestic figure stood there all ablaze with wrath. The door was shut. Then again the professor sat in his chair. But the storm was done. With a trembling voice he read the discourse, seeming almost unable to go on. After the lecture we left only to gather in groups and discuss this wonderful thing. Presently came a message that the offender was wanted ; and he hastened to the irate professor expecting an angry reprimand. But there sat the old man in tears.

“My brother,” he sobbed, “will you forgive me ?”

“No, sir ; indeed it is I who should apologize,” said the student, overwhelmed.

“No, no, I am the older. Will you forgive me ? I am very, very sorry. Say that you forgive me—”

The student managed to get out a word or two.

“And you must tell all the students that I have apologized, will you ?” And again there was a pause for the promise.

“Now,” said the noble old man, “I will go and ask God to forgive me.”

Nothing in all that life, nothing in all his words, ever did us so much good as that. We knew then under that gentleness and beauty what fires burned ; and every man of us had a new faith, and a new hope and a new love.

Go home, and tell thy friends what great things the Lord hath done for thee. The Lord go with you every one, and keep you true and loving and brave. Amen.

## A GOSPEL THAT IS NO GOSPEL.

BY THE REV. ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A.

TEXT: *Galatians i. 1-10.*

IT has often been observed that St. Paul usually begins his letters with an expression of thanksgiving, and with a word of commendation, so far as honesty allows it, to his correspondents. Even the first letter to the Corinthians, which was written expressly to rebuke the many serious abuses in the Church, begins with a very hearty commendation, as the Apostle glories in the things which are worthy amongst even that degenerate people. But you notice that this epistle has none of these amenities. In this epistle, when the salutation is over, there is no giving of thanks, there is no word of commendation; the Apostle exclaims in a kind of astonished indignation, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel." And when we come to observe what it was they were moved from, and what it was they were moved to, we shall see his wonder and indignation had sufficient grounds.

What was it they were moved from? They were moved from the glory of God; "from him that called you," that is, God. God Himself had spoken to those people; God Himself had in the glorious message of Jesus Christ crucified invited those men to come and be saved. God Himself had offered everyone of them an immediate and an unconditional pardon directly they came. God Himself had promised them the beginnings of a spiritual life which should be maintained by the Holy Spirit of God, and should lead, step by step, with ever-increasing joy and triumph, until at last these men should enter into the kingdom of Heaven redeemed and complete. That is what they had left; from that they were removed.

And what was it they were moved to? To what the Apostle calls a quite different gospel. Nay, he will not allow the word gospel: it is too beautiful a word for the message of which he is speaking; a quite different gospel which is not a *gospel*; a call which came not from God, but from man, from a human system, from a human theory—a call which invited these Galatians to be saved, to put it briefly, by saving themselves: invited them to "make their calling and election sure" by fulfilling impossible conditions, and condemned them to live a life of dreary external observances, which, however interesting, and however imposing, and however brilliant, could never bring peace to the soul or growth to the soul's life.

Now you cannot be surprised that the Apostle says, "I marvel that you are moved from such a Gospel to such a fictitious gospel." It is just as if a man, who had been drinking for many days at the pure streams that bubble out of the hills, were to come and say that for the future he meant to satisfy his thirst with the impure rinsings of some hand-made cistern of water. It is just as if men who had been listening to the high and inspiring discourse of a great poet had grown tired of it, and had come down to receive the low ditties of the street as their poetry for the future. Nay, it is just as if men had been admitted to the most ennobling and inspiring friendship, and had grown tired of it, because it was so good, and had turned to the empty talk and the showy brilliance of interested and evil companions. "I marvel at you," he says. He speaks like a man who cannot understand the position ; the whole thing seems too absurd. To put it in a word, it was *a change from religion to religiosity* ; and, as St. Paul says, the men who had led the Galatians into such a disastrous change were troubling them, though not giving them the sense of trouble—unfortunately they were too well contented with their new-fangled gospel. Just as a camel going down to the waters to drink, stepping into the clear pool, would trouble the waters, filling them with mud, these men were filling with mud the limpid waters of God ; were obscuring the depths and the sparkling purity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ : they were taking the great fact, the best fact that the men of that day, and the men of this day, know, the fact of God's free salvation through Jesus Christ, and under pretence of honoring it, and while professing to preach it, were twisting it and turning it right round into a totally different thing, and making it no gospel at all, but a mere creation of their own wilful fancy.

Now, dear friends, the Apostle's wonder would probably not have been so great had he lived in these latter days. We have grown too used to it to be surprised. But you can understand how he would feel. He had just come under the full blaze of this divine truth ; he was just living in the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Christ ; he was just rejoicing in the emancipation from those old, worn-out formulæ and endless superficial rites ; he was just feeling the power of the living Gospel, the power of the living Christ ; he was just experiencing the indefinite expansion which such a principle implies, and he was growing up into the fulness of the measure of the stature of Christ. Now you cannot be surprised that he would think that the message he was bringing to men would be irresistible ; that directly they saw it they would leap at it, and directly they had received it they would keep it, that nothing on earth would ever persuade them to turn from this manna sent from heaven to the very husks which the swine do eat. You cannot be surprised St. Paul felt this wonder. I say we have grown used to it. "Pity 'tis 'tis true." We have grown quite familiar now with the sight of the fine gold of God tarnished by

the breath of man ; quite familiar with the waters that flowed out of heaven, muddy and befouled by the tread of human feet. We have grown quite familiar with the astonishing readiness of human beings to desert the highest for the less high, and to sink from the less high to the low. Men do not in spiritual things profit by the experience of those that go before ; and what is still stranger, they do not much profit by their own experience. How constantly we see the children of pious parents who have been acquainted all their childhood with the "life hidden with Christ in God," have seen their fathers and their mothers living this life, and have received the breath of purity and sweetness which emanates from this life ; and yet these same young people, with the eager hunger for all the lower things, ready to desert all, and to turn their backs upon that high heavenward life that their parents lived in order to walk the lower path of mere sensual enjoyment in religion, the mere pageantry of worship, the mere pomp of human invention, and to forget the divine things which were ingrained in them, even in their childhood.

But what is still more strange, you will see a man turn his back on his own spiritual experience. He has had visions of this pure faith ; he has had visitations of the divine Spirit ; he has walked with the rest towards the spiritual city, and he has felt the power and the joy of that divine life ; but he passes under an evil spell, all at once, because of some tinsel rhetoric which he has heard, or because he has been dazzled by the parade which catches the eye. Sometimes he is influenced by less worthy motives ; because it is convenient, and leads him into particular channels of business, he quits the Gospel to which God has called him in the grace of Jesus Christ, and turns to the empty husks of an outward religion. And what seems stranger still, this man will often be filled with a bitter hostility to the very persons with whom formerly he was travelling along the high road of holiness up to the City of God. When we see these things we seem bound to accept the New Testament explanation of them. According to the New Testament, we are circled round with principalities and powers, airy shapes and influences, which hover about the unwary Christian's head, and whisper subtle sophistries into the careless Christian's ears ; and with all the appearance of piety, clad sometimes like an angel of light, these powers that work against the spirit come and persuade us to follow in the path which leads to spiritual ruin, and we, like sheep going to the slaughter, are ready to obey.

We are told by scientific people that the atmosphere we breathe is crowded with myriads upon myriads of tiny organisms which penetrate our bodies, are swallowed in our breath, and watch carefully for every dead piece of organic matter, that they may enter in and plant their germs of putrescence and decay in these favorable nests. And it would seem that our spiritual atmosphere also is possessed by these delusions and corruptions of the spirit that are

ready at every point to enter into our nature, to breathe corruption, to germinate disease, and to discover their presence suddenly when the ruin has been wrought. How wisely does the Apostle caution us to be on our guard against the principalities and powers that haunt the spiritual life.

Now I want to ask you to notice these impassioned feelings with which St. Paul speaks of those who were thus troubling the saints of Galatia. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be anathema."

The Apostle is not speaking here of ecclesiastical comminations with bell and candle. That was a thing which came later, in the time of the Church's decadence. That the Apostle is not even thinking of that is made plain by the fact that he first uses the expression in speaking of an angel; for even the most arrogant of ecclesiastical courts would hardly think of passing the ban of excommunication upon an angel. He is not even dreaming of what we have learnt to know as the ecclesiastical ban of excommunication. He is speaking of something much higher, and of something which is much less liable to abuse. What he means is: Let this preacher of another gospel, in God's sight and presence and by God's own power and judgment, be anathema. "If an angel should"—that of course is an extreme case and an impossibility—but "if a man does," that was not an impossibility, for it had been realized in Galatia. If a man does preach any other gospel than that which they had received, let him—that man in Galatia, who had done it, that group of men who were doing it—be anathema. It is strong language, but let us remove all these thoughts of ecclesiastical comminations, and let us realize the spirit of the Apostle Paul: his perfect freedom from all selfishness and all arrogance, his intense love for the Gospel which he had believed, and which had saved him, and which he wished other men to believe and thereby to be saved. His purpose was that this Gospel should live and work in the world unchecked, unhindered. Let us realize all that, and we can understand the strength of his language. Nay, more than that, when we realize all this, the words seem to come from higher lips than Paul's. It is God's voice speaking through an Apostle, through a man, that these persons must be anathema. For if it be true that God has determined to save man, if He has determined to lay the way of salvation plain and open for all men to enter in, if He has determined that it shall be free as the air we breathe, if He has determined that it shall be inward and spiritual and efficacious, and therefore manifest in the outward life, if He has determined that you—to take the first instance that strikes us—that you a sinful man, stained and condemned for your sin to-night, shall be able

to-night to enter into life through faith in Jesus Christ, if He has ordained that no envious voice should stand at the gateway to forbid the poorest sinner to enter, if He has ordained that the most helpless and fallen shall be welcome, washed and cleansed, and sent upon the way of life with the Saviour in him, and around him, and above him—if that is what God has ordained, if that is what God means by a Gospel—then supposing men, any body of men, any system, any church, steps in and perverts it; suppose the whole message is practically changed, suppose it is represented that we are to come not to the love of God, but to the ordinances of men; suppose we are told that we are to come not to Christ, but to these men who represent Christ, and to Christ only through them; suppose we are told that salvation shall be the reward of a painful, laborious, doubtful effort to live, self-denyingly, and purely, and truly; supposing we are told that the religion which shall come from this salvation shall be a tedious repetition of empty formulæ and an observance of external rites; suppose that by this the whole Gospel of Christ is deliberately reversed, twisted, made incredible and impossible to men; surely in God's order and by God's decree the men who teach it, the men who pervert His simple faith, are and must be anathema. They stand between the Christ and the sinner. They stand between the prodigal and the father. They erect a barrier, which men look at and long to break through, when God said, Let them enter in.

Now we can understand the vehemence of the Apostle, and we can read this further verse with which our passage closes: “For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” These enemies had charged him with seeking to please men. They had said, He is one of those people who try to be all things to all men; and now St. Paul says, I want you to understand that I never in all my life sought to please men; that I fully understand that the attempt to please men means that I shall not please God; and this vehemence of language which I use is to be the witness to you that I am not seeking for your applause or for your approval; that I am seeking simply to tell you the plain truth as I know it in Christ Jesus. That seems to be the Apostle's thought.

Now I just want to make one observation on the subject in general. St. Paul's vehement language reminds us to-day that there is a time when vehement language is necessary if we are to be faithful to God. When men are rising up in open and avowed opposition to the Gospel of Christ, there is no need for vehemence; we have simply to preach the Gospel, and to seek to win our opponents by showing them the living love of God in our conduct and in our life. But when men begin, not to oppose the Gospel, but to appropriate it, and having appropriated it, to pervert it, to twist it round from its original meaning, to make it practically incredible to reasoning minds; and when under the form of honor-

ing it, they are really destroying it ; then, according to the Apostle's example, and according to the Spirit's monitions, it is the duty of Christian people to speak out plainly and unequivocally, and with all the power and authority which the Spirit has given them to lay bare the delusions which are thrust upon their fellows.

Need I remind you, dear friends, that at the present moment, in Europe, and indeed in the world, and more particularly in our own country, the formalist is once more attempting the same task that these men attempted in Galatia ? The formalist is again preaching the Gospel of Christ in the very words which St. Paul would use ; but when he comes to explain what he means in the confessional or in private conversation, he tells the people that by coming to Christ he means being baptized ; and by living on Christ, he means taking an external sacrament. And that is just the opposite of what St. Paul taught—the very opposite to the Gospel that changed the world. It is allied with all the idolatries against which the Gospel fought, it is ruinous in the end to the very spirit with which the Gospel came. Need I remind you that where this has attained any dominant power in any country, in Europe, Asia, or South America, gradually the thinking people have given up religion, and have turned with bitter loathing and indignation from what they took to be the Christ, but what was really the perversion of His Gospel ? Is it to be wondered at if I, for instance, led into some imposing temple where I understand the secrets of the oracles of God are kept, through the long aisles into the secret holy of holies, there to discover the hidden God, and at last when I am entered find some paltry doll, or some trivial painting, and no food for the spirit, no direct revelation of my God, is it to be wondered at that I turn out of the great temple into the street and say, " Let me at least breathe the air of heaven, and be rid of this religion which is called God's, but is obviously man's " ? It is no exaggeration to say, that the infidelity of Europe must be laid at the doors of those who have troubled the Church by doing precisely what these men attempted to do in Galatia in the earliest years of the Gospel.

Let me remind you how the thing works. You have sometimes seen a tree, or the branch of a tree, that has become petrified. Little by little it has been transformed into stone. The branch retains its form, and even shows the same appearance, but it is no longer wood ; it is stone. Such petrifaction, I suppose, can only take place where the branch or the trunk is dead. Now that is precisely what happens in the course which St. Paul is reprobating. Little by little, because the Church has begun to be spiritually dead, this outward ceremony, this gorgeous form, this loud-mouth claim of a man is substituted for the spiritual reality. Little by little the Church, which had become dead wood, is transformed into dead stone—formalism and unreality reign supreme.

Now that St. Paul was divinely inspired to understand this and to impress it on us in this brief epistle, no one living to-day, and thinking and feeling the thought and feeling of the day, can possibly question. For what St. Paul foresaw actually happened. In the seventh century the Church had become formalized, and Mahomet came into Arabia to declare his faith as a spiritual faith against the Christian faith, which was a material faith, the worship of images and saints. After that, the churches of the East becoming formalized again, became totally unable to cope with the rising tide of Mohammedanism, and paralyzed even in the presence of Buddhism and Brahmanism. In our own day, we can go to parts of Europe where the same thing has taken place, and we can find villages where Joseph, the father of Jesus, is worshipped as the supreme being, because it is argued the son must be obedient to the mother, and the mother must be obedient to the husband. We find wherever this fatal error has been made, slowly and surely the fountains of spiritual life dry up, and the faith of God becomes a lie.

Dear friend, with the page of Christian history open before us, we cannot wonder at St. Paul's passionate indignation; we cannot wonder that he said, "Let those who preach another gospel from this spiritual message which I have delivered be anathema in God's sight." And there seems to be laid on you and me to-day a necessity to enter into the thought of these apostolic times, to realize how these apostolic epistles are equal to coping with all the errors and mistakes of subsequent church history. And I want to ask you not to accept my word for it, not to accept my interpretation of it, but taking this Epistle to the Galatians, and comparing what these teachers taught the people with the prevailing teaching about ceremonies, days, and seasons, ask if these truths do not apply to-day, and if the fear of St. Paul is not the fear of earnest souls amongst us, lest this Gospel which is being preached should be made of none effect by a different gospel which is not a gospel, but is merely the creation of a human mind! May God give us grace to be free in the spirit, outspoken, and strong, and yet loving to all, because we love God's truth the most.

## CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD.

BY THE VENERABLE WILLIAM M. SINCLAIR, D.D.,

ARCHDEACON OF LONDON.

*“All ye are brethren.”—ST. MATTHEW xxiii. 8.*

THE teaching of our Lord in His holy Gospel is sometimes represented to you as a matter which concerns the highest interest of your souls but is far away from practical life. Now, although it is perfectly true that our Lord's first message is for the salvation of our souls, yet, on the other hand, when I look into the Bible and see what our Lord was concerned in teaching I find that day after day, and in place after place, He was giving lessons for this life, for godliness, for brotherhood, for concord, for peace, for all those great human principles and truths which would knit society together, and would make, if they were followed out, the community of men a kingdom of Heaven upon earth. And one of the great new truths that our Lord Jesus Christ in this way taught was the brotherhood of men, specially in the unity of His kingdom. It was an entirely new truth. Sometimes perhaps we are so accustomed to these great doctrines and principles, and have thought of them all our lives, that we do not remember to whom the discovery was owing. We fancy such a truth as that must have been known from the very beginning of the world. It is not so.

The three great principles, for instance—only one of which I am going to speak about now—which were the watchwords of the French Revolution, “Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,” were all discovered and taught for the first time to mankind by the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is only of Brotherhood that I have time to speak to you to-day. “All ye are brethren.” How was it in the time that our Lord lived? There were two great civilized nations at that time. The one was on the wane and the other was in its full glory. In Greece we have the highest example of philosophy. I am, however, not here to preach on philosophy, but I will say this, that the highest, and best and purest of the philosophers was Plato, and he described an ideal state; he called it an ideal Republic. There was always to be a large class at the bottom, who were to be slaves, and do the rough and dirty work; but it was the richest class who received the highest prizes. At the time when our Lord was speaking Rome was, as you know, embarking on its great career of an almost world-wide empire under Augustus Cæsar and Tiberius Cæsar. In those days the great complaint of the Romans was that slavery had multiplied to such an enormous extent that the privi-

leges of the Roman citizens, who were the real representatives of the community, were few and far between; and almost all the work on the farms and in the towns was done by masses of slaves who had become a danger to the State.

So much for brotherhood in the days of our Lord. It was a new message He gave to mankind. It was only when it came from His lips that the world heard the lesson in language which could not be mistaken, and ever since the world has been trying to learn that lesson, but has not succeeded. If it had succeeded then the kingdom of Heaven would indeed be an established fact amongst men.

Now there is a warning that we should not take our Lord's teaching according to the letter, but according to the spirit. That warning is in the French Revolution which took place about a hundred years ago. In those days mankind in France were all yearning for something better than had existed before. They had a bad system of government. There was no nation in the world that had risen so strongly and so eagerly to the idea of something newer and better which should sweep away all their troubles than the French nation; and they through the philosophers who were teaching them at that time—Rousseau and others—had taken to heart the lesson of our Lord—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. They chose these as their watchwords; but they put them into execution in a wrong sense; so one after another they swept away their old institutions, which, however, I am not here now to defend. By taking these ideas, and wishing to force them on mankind literally and by violence, they defeated their own object, and misunderstood our Lord; and the French nation is at the present day no happier, or more united or consolidated than it was a hundred years ago. I am not mentioning that for any political object, but as a warning that if we take our Lord's words according to the letter and not according to the spirit, or the sense, we may be making a great mistake, and defeating the object we have in view.

What our Lord meant was—"All you who hear me and understand my doctrine, and desire to be Christians and sons of God, you must understand that the first thing you have to do after you have begun to listen to me is to recognize amongst yourselves, no matter what difference there may be socially, intellectually, or in any other way, that you are indeed all really brothers." Think for a moment what that implies. It implies that we are all one family; we cannot have interests apart from one another; that one class cannot shut itself up and say, "I am going to live for myself, and for my own objects and advantages, and I do not care what happens to the other classes." That cannot be said with any plausibility by communities or by men, since our Lord has spoken those golden words. It means we are to care for the things of one another rather than for the things of ourselves. Who is the best brother of a family? Not the one who goes off by himself, and

cares not for the others, and makes his own fortune, and does not care or feel interested whether the others share it or not. No; it is the man who says, "If I am to be a true man, and have the advantage and gain of this world's good fortune, my brothers and sisters shall share it with me, and we will all go forward together." That is the true spirit of *brotherhood*, which our Lord introduced to the world, and which is the business of all men to practise.

I would also ask you to consider other trenchant words of our Lord, which if followed by Christians would indeed have the effect of curing most of the evils of which we complain. We complain of people being too impatient to be great. Our Lord said, "Whosoever will be great let him be your servant." Think, if all Christians had followed out that principle, what would have been the effect on the fortunes of mankind. Again, we complain of people being too eager to obtain titles of respect and honor, and giving up their principles in order to obtain these distinctions. What did our Lord say? "Be ye not called rabbi." Again, we complain of people in the present day, however enlightened it may be, being too eager for riches, and anxious to make wealth for themselves, often without scruple, or thought, or consideration for others. What did our Lord say? "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

Our Lord called our attention to the higher principles of justice and truth and honor, and love and morality, and He bade His disciples, and all they that heard Him, that they should turn their attention away from the sordid things of this earth, which only call forth selfishness and every evil passion, and fix their thoughts on things above.

We complain in these days that people are too luxurious, and try to get the richest meats and the choicest wines for their table. What did our Lord say? "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give." We complain that people are too worldly, and do not think enough of their own soul's welfare, or the general good of the community. What did our Lord say? "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

We complain that people are vulgar, and desire always to get forward, and have the best room at feasts, and wherever they go they desire to be thought most of, and to be first. What did our Lord say? "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed." And He also said, "Thou, when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest

room"; put yourself in the place of humility, and let others go up before yourself.

Again, we are taught, that we, at any rate, are to have "no respect of persons." St. James says—"My brethren, . . . if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves?" Have ye not mistaken the whole spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ?

These are some few of the moral and direct lessons of our Saviour, which would have the very greatest possible effect if all we who are Christians, from the highest to the lowest, were to put them daily into practical experiment in our lives, and see what they would do. What we need in the present day especially, when there are so many differences, so many different class-interests warring against each other—we Christians at least—is to take the blessed words of our Lord which stand in His Gospel, to learn, and understand, and receive them into our hearts, and make them the real principles of our lives, and act on them, day by day, in every social relationship. Brotherhood should be rather with those below us, I think, than with those who are above us. It might be rather difficult always to practice *brotherhood* on our own terms with those above us in life, and it might lead to disagreeable consequences, because they might not be ready to reciprocate our wishes. But it is in the power of all of us, whether high or low, rich or poor, to take those principles to our hearts—for every one of us has someone below us. We can say to them, "You are my brothers; you have the same interests as myself; we are all children of the one great human family. God is the father of all of us; Jesus Christ is alike the Saviour of us all; He is the elder Brother of us all, and He left us these golden words. We will act on them; you shall be my brother and I will be yours. I will desire only your best interests, and I will expect you only to desire mine." When that has once been taken up as the acting truth of our lives, and is thoroughly understood by us, it is astonishing how far that example will spread, and how wide an influence it will produce all around us of love, and peace, and mutual respect, and a desire for each other's welfare and prosperity.

This was only one of the ideas of our Lord. It is a comprehensive idea. It is that we should bear one another's burdens. Let me read to you what Carlyle has said—"My brother, thy sorrows, thy interests, all that concern thee concern me also; they are my joys, my sorrows; I will share them with thee; we will live together as one great human family, with the same interests, the same hopes, the same principles guiding our conduct." So gradually by God's grace, and the help of His Holy Spirit, we shall do away with all

that selfishness, and self-interest which is the curse of any great civilized community, and which if left alone and untouched by the spirit of Christianity would soon root out every possible element of health and prosperity from that nation which was cursed by it.

My brothers, let this be our thought to-day. Some of us may not have fully understood how deep, how widespread, how universal was this lesson of our Lord Jesus Christ on this great subject. Let us, I say, take it to our inmost souls, and in future act upon it, not merely for one day or another day, but throughout the whole length and extent of our lives, and see what a blessing God will make us.

And as to our religious differences, what an enormous gulf would be bridged over if that spirit were truly and rightly understood! If Churchmen and Nonconformists, if all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, would recognize that after all, whatever differences there may be in principle, whatever *esprit de corps*, and other matters which have come down from our forefathers, we would remember that we are after all *brethren* in the true sense of the word—"one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"; also "there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"; hoping together one day to tread the golden courts of Heaven; then I think we should have mutual admiration for each other.

Then, again, with regard to our trades and occupations, and our daily lives; wherever we go people would say that whatever our faults be, and however imperfect our life be in other respects, we evidently have still been with the Lord Jesus Christ, and we have drunk of His Spirit, and His Spirit was the guiding principle of our lives.

God grant that we may think more of this than we have done in the past, and be truer citizens of this great empire. God grant that all here may have a blessing to convey to those about them, and that they may be able to understand the words of our Lord Jesus Christ—"All ye are brethren."

## SONS OF ELI, YET SONS OF BELIAL.

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

*“The sons of Eli were sons of Belial.”—I. SAMUEL ii. 12.*

**L**ET us see if we can remember these words: “The sons of Eli were sons of Belial.” That would seem to be impossible. Eli was a holy man. Eli was a priest. Eli was not intellectually a strong man, but morally he was righteous and faithful up to a very high degree. He was not much of a ruler at home, still he was substantially a good man. Belial represents corruption, darkness, the devil, the unholy genius of the universe, anything that indicates selfishness, baseness, corruption. Now read the text: “The sons of Eli, the holy priest, were sons of Belial, the bad spirit, the evil genius.”

We are always coming upon these conflicts, ironies, impossibilities. There is no smooth reading in history. For miles the river flows calmly and brightly, and is almost the willing mirror of the green beauty all around, and the blue on high; then suddenly it plunges over some great rocks, and becomes not a river, but a cataract. For a long time a man lives a sober, honest and good sort of life, and the day after to-morrow you will hear that he has gone to the devil. What has he done? All kinds of things that are wrong. Statistically he may only have done one thing, but that one thing may be so pregnant and inclusive as to hold in it a whole hell. There are some one things that we could not have done but for a process that means long plotting, deep conspiracy, many a secret interview with our spiritual foe; and we have lighted our mental candle at the torch of his baleful genius. Our suggestions are not all our own. We can carry a good deal of evil. Men do not like to hear of this. They would rather hear music and see pictures, and be taken out at summer noon tide and be shown all the celestial blue, and all the apocalypse of light-charged clouds. At the same time there is the fact, solemn, tragical, tremendous, that the sons of a good man may be bad men, and that good men themselves may be surprised or insidiously led into the deepest, gravest evils. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe.” Only as we live and move and have our being in God can we realize all our privileges, and turn them into solid and beneficent character. What becomes of the doctrine of spiritual heredity? There may be something in physical descent, and there ought to be a good deal in spiritual descent. Eli ought not to have bad sons. Bad people ought never to come out of good homes. Their so doing

involves so much, and implicates so many people, and throws suspicion upon so many circumstances and processes, unworthy and humiliating suspicion. The danger is that Eli himself may be charged with responsibility. It is so difficult for an ill-judging and prejudiced human nature to distinguish between cause and effect. How apt we are to say because a man is bad, his father must have been bad. We are more apt to say that perhaps, than to say the contrary, namely, this youth must surely be good, his father was such an honest man. There is a good deal of evil in us in this direction, always willing to find out wickedness, always prepared to suggest hypocrisy, seldom inclined to think and feel the best about children that have come out of sweet homes. Yet we ought so to act towards them as to suggest to their own minds that we are simply bewildered and confounded by certain things we have seen in them, which contrast so vividly and terribly with what we expected from them. Do not suppose that you will be good men because your father was a good man, or your mother a good woman. You may upset the whole process of heredity, you may create a point of departure in your own development. It lies within the power, but not within the right of every man to say, "From the date of my birth there shall be black blood in our family, I will live the downward life, I will make hospitality in the house for evil spirits," so easy is it to destroy, so tempting is it to make bad fame.

But we see this not only religiously in the distinctive sense of that term; we see this inversion and perversion of heredity all along the lines of life, and in all the spheres of human experience. A civilized man, a son of civilization, may be one of the most barbarous men upon the face of the earth; it does not come within the power of a savage to be so barbarous as a civilized man can be. Let us beware how we talk about savages, and barbarians, and people who are not civilized, and the like. I would again lay down the thought which cannot now be discussed and illustrated at large, that civilization has in its power, by the very necessity of its being civilization, to go deeper than ever poor ignorant barbarism could do. Barbarism has not the intelligence, has not the faculty, has not the instruments. There is no fall so tremendous as the fall from heaven. How foolish we are, therefore, in this discrimination of character, when we fall back from the poor savage, and hold concert and fellowship with the perverted son of civilization, the man who knows all that art can do, and yet serves the very spirit of baseness. There are atheisms of that kind in great abundance in the world, men who know music and never listen to it except it is hired to do the devil's work, men who are critics in art, and yet care nothing for it except the figure shall suggest the devil—not openly, overtly, and vulgarly, but shall have about it some twist and color and suggestion pointing downward towards all evil indulgence and interdicted delight. "The sons of Eli were sons of

Belial." The corresponding sentence in the lower levels of history is, "The sons of civilization are sons of barbarism."

So we might proceed to further illustration and say, "The sons of education are sons of the greatest ignorance." Some day we shall understand the meaning of the word education better. It is not a word to be limited to letters and to the knowledge of what has happened in the world. It is a word which ought to apply to the soul, to its development, its fruition, its continual uplifting towards the highest ideal, yea, to the very Deity Himself. Who can be so ignorant as a soul who has given himself up to the service of evil? It is not ignorance of the base and vulgar type that can be excused on the ground of want of privilege and want of opportunity, but it is that peculiar ignorance which, having the light, hides it; which knowing the right, does the wrong. Who commits the crime of the world? Men of great intelligence unbalanced by great moral integrity. There is a sense in which ignorance may conduce to crime. That is crime of the most diluted sort compared to the crime that is possible to an educated or intelligent man who is about to use the instrument of intelligence for doing the work of evil. Such men ought to be punished ten-fold more than the poor waifs and strays who never had any chance in life, who never had one really long happy summer day in all their experience. When you find a so-called gentleman doing wrong, let him feel what it is to be in penal servitude. Education, is an element in his condemnation. We must not treat poor, miserable, homeless ignorance and crime as if they were the most dangerous quality. It is the man who knows better and can do better, and will not do it, that is the pest of society.

Sometimes we may say, "The sons of refinement are the sons of vulgarity." There is a refinement which is only external; there is a refinement of form and of conventionality and of habit and of custom. There are men who will lie whilst they are smiling; there are men who can indulge their worst passions even when they are apparently indulging their highest aspirations. To laugh at the want of refinement in others who have never had an opportunity of being refined is the cruelest and the basest vulgarity. Refinement of the highest quality is patient, hopeful, sympathetic. The divine refinement sees beauty where the eyes of selfishness and worldliness can only see features and elements to mock and to laugh at. Say, is there any refinement so vulgar as the refinement which gives itself up to work all manner of evil criticism with greediness and with diabolical delight in the torture and humiliation of others?

The whole point is this, that our heredity may be broken in upon, our ancestral privileges may be thrown away; sons of Eli may be sons of Belial. We hold nothing by right of ancestry. That has been the curse of history, so far. The whole spirit of feudalism is a spirit of wickedness, because a spirit of selfishness.

We ought to hold nothing by right of ancestry. Every man should hold his property by right of labor, by right of honest moral conquest. Whatever you have, young man, take it at the spear point. What was given you is nothing ; but what God has enabled you to get with your own bow and arrow, that is wealth. You can appreciate it, you can value it ; you know what it cost you. But when riches and honor and all kinds of shallow delight have been thrust upon you as if by right, why you become wanton and unruly, lustful and suicidal. Whatever we have in the way of moral character we hold, not because our fathers and mothers were good, but as the result of our own good conduct under the grace and blessing of God. You cannot hand down a good character to others. You can set up a good reputation for goodness, and that ought to be a suggestion and a stimulus and a direction and a comfort, but you cannot hand on your character as you hand on your acres or your pounds sterling. Whatever we have we can only have by right of labor, thought, watchfulness, and conducting the whole economy of life in the spirit of stewardship.

Oh, he is poor, so poor that words fail to describe his pauperism, who has nothing but what has been left him ; and he never would have had it, if the people could have taken it away with them. But having to unload it somewhere, they unloaded it at his feet. That is not life, that is not character, that is not greatness—whatever you learned yourself, whatever you mastered. Your father could not give to you his knowledge even of the alphabet. Every man has to conquer the alphabet as if no other man had ever conquered it before. Why not amplify that idea and carry it throughout the whole scheme of character, and see how we are called upon to work for all we have, and not to depend upon ancestral blessings and privileges ? If we, however, receive these in the right spirit, we can turn them into advantages. They need not to be burdens. They can be so received as to perpetuate noble memories, they can be so received as to be used as accessories to strength already in possession. But to the man who has not learned to conquer life on his own account under the inspiration and blessing of God, all gifts become more or less burdensome, and of the nature of encumbrances and hindrances in the way of progress. Do not, then, say : " My father was good, my mother was good, therefore I need not take any interest in these matters myself ; part of the virtue is laid up for me. I may draw upon it by and by." All that reasoning is vicious, false, spiritually destructive. A double damnation is theirs who have great advantages to begin with, and who do not rise to the nobleness and greatness of their opportunities. What some men have to begin with ! How much they have ! Such roomy houses, such libraries, such kindness and love on the part of their parents and friends ; they are born to all manner of social advantages so-called—where are they to-day ? How dare

some men look back to their beginnings and compare those beginnings with what they are to-day? Their fathers were great or good, their homes were loveliness itself, the walls were alive with eloquent color, and all the air was charged with the music of birds and young lives of many kinds. They had great opportunities for learning at school. They were sent to the best academies; no bill of cost was regarded as too high in discharge of their educational responsibilities. Where are they to-day? Did not they begin with too much? Were they not overburdened? I have seen boys who have been the round of the Continent of Europe before they were thirteen. That is inflicting a tremendous disadvantage upon any boy to give him all that he can be given just as he is opening his teens. Rather keep him to the plough, keep him to labor, keep him to service, teach him that life is not a joke, or a dream or a scented delight. Teach him that life is a service, a discipline, a probation, an education; and then, as the years come and go, give him larger and larger advantages because his capacity is increased, and his sense of appreciation, and his sense of gratitude.

Possibly some of you may have begun too well. You are not altogether to be blamed for it. I have men, applicants for bounty now, whose fathers were worth one hundred thousand pounds. There are men in London to-day on the tramcars who came from houses such as I never saw until I was probably more than five and twenty years of age. There are men who have wasted a whole inheritance of ancestral repute for wisdom and greatness. Yet I cannot altogether blame them. The parentel Eli cannot wholly escape responsibility. They had too much. Things came too easily. Easy come, easy go, is a motto which experience has tested and endorsed. It would have been better for some men if they had begun lower down with harder fare and more work to do.

And with how little have some other men begun, and yet look at them to-day. How is this? They have been faithful, they have been honest, they have recognized the spirit of stewardship and have answered it. God knows all this and will judge accordingly. We must judge men by comparison and not by absolute position and result. What were the men at the beginning? What was their struggle? How high was the hill they had to climb before they ever got a breath of fresh air? How long were they confined to some dingy position where they never heard a bird uncaged sing in the morning? How difficult it was for them to pick up a little learning. They pick up a little at night school. I have been told by some of them that they learned to write with a skewer in the sand that was spread upon the school table, and yet I have seen them to rise to wealth, which is nothing; to intelligence, which is much; and to spiritual influence, which is best of all.

Do not, therefore, on the one hand, presume upon your parentage, and say, "My father was good and therefore I cannot be bad";

and do not, on the other hand, be discouraged, and say "I came from so low a beginning that it is impossible for me to do anything." There is nothing impossible to courage, to faith, to reverence, to prayer. I would therefore cheer those to whom life has been a hard lot so far. There is nothing impossible to you if you be in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then you are living a harmonic life—living musically, living sympathetically. Then you march with the stars, you are in the course of the divine development of history. At the judgment how many will be first whom we thought last, and how many will be last whom we thought first! The miracles of society we have not yet fully discovered. There is, it may be, many a boy that is here who is a great miracle in the sight of God. It does not appear so to us, because we do not know all the origins, all the beginnings, and all the difficulty. But at the last God will identify him and crown him.

Work in the spirit of hopefulness, therefore. The way up has been very difficult to some of you, because you have no sooner got an inch above ground than some cruel foot was set upon you and crushed you back again. Still hope in God. There is no day so long that it will not close, there is no darkness so dense that God cannot pierce it with shafts of light; and in the long run you may be all the better for your weakness, and sorrow, and difficulty, and struggle. God knows it all. Do not trouble to explain yourselves or to defend yourselves. Keep to your work, go on faithfully, sturdily, solemnly, and lovingly and courageously, and at the end you shall have light enough.

God is judge. What are you pampered ones going to do? You had better give it all up and start afresh. What are you discontented ones going to do? It is long since you saw a new book. You have read the first pages of many books at the booksellers' windows, and sometimes have said, "Oh, if that page would only turn over! What is there on the other side of it?" We have ready a first page to-night. Perhaps to-morrow the bookseller will make a mistake in setting it up, and we shall read overleaf. One of the greatest Latin scholars in the century learned what little Latin he did under a public lamp. He could not afford a candle at home, and so he went to read by a parochial lamp. If you want to be good, and true, and great, you can be it all in some degree. Do not sit there repining, and whining, and moaning; but rise, do the little that lies within the reach, and no man can tell what a harvest may come out of one handful of corn. Sow the corn, and the fruit of it may shake like Lebanon.

## “THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS.”

BY THE REV. MARK GUY PEARSE.

“*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.*”—PHIL. iii. 10.

*The fellowship of suffering*—is not that the deepest, strongest, closest fellowship in the world? Hearts are made one indeed when they are thrust into the fiery furnace of a common affliction and welded by the blows of the same sorrows. Have you noticed in the life of the Lord Jesus how touchingly He sought this fellowship? He Himself brought Heaven near to earth, and taught us that there was joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repented. He Himself gratefully accepted their ministry and service. But for fellowship in His sufferings He turned not to the angels who, it may be, have never suffered and never sorrowed, but to us men and women. Human hearts alone could understand and answer to His sorrow. It is a thought that might turn grief into more than gold and tears to pearls, that these things do enrich us with God-like sympathy and pity. Upon the mountain-top it was Moses and Elijah that came down from Heaven to talk to Him of the decease that He should accomplish at Jerusalem. And in Gethsemane, where in His agony He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood, although the angel appeared from Heaven strengthening Him, yet it was to His disciples He turned with the entreaty, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” And though He is risen and entered into His glory, yet St. Paul cries passionately that he counts all things but loss that he may know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. Well, then, may this be our purpose and desire—to know the fellowship of His sufferings.

There is a fellowship of His sufferings which is secret and personal. That must indeed be ours if we would be His. The Cross of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, because it is the power of God unto repentance. In the Cross of Jesus Christ I see my sins as God sees them. The Cross is the awful revelation of what sin is. Into that white light which beats upon the Cross let us bring the sins of our life of which we have made so little—the harshness, the hasty and the unkind judgment, the foul desire, the pride, the covetousness—bring them hither, the things undone, the things ill-done, things so easily excused, so lightly forgotten. “Lift up your eyes all ye that pass by, and see if there were ever sorrow like unto His sorrow.” “Is it nothing—nothing—that Thou, my Lord, shouldst be laden with accursed shame; that Thou

shouldst be crowned with thorns; that against Thee should gather the multitude to mock Thee with foul taunts? Is it nothing—nothing—that Thou shouldst hang deserted, forsaken, accursed?” Oh, is it not everything—everything—when I do see that my sins have done it all? Surely He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The evil that my thought and heart have wrought have plaited that cruel crown of thorns. It is as if my hands had driven in those nails, and I had thrust the spear. My carelessness and folly have seemed to cry, “Away with Him,” my sin has scourged and stricken and crucified my Lord. Oh, ye that love the Lord, hate evil. Hate it. At that sight let us burn with the white heat of indignation. Surely that Cross of Christ must make our sin so cruel, so dreadful that we would sooner die than grieve Him again. Let our hearts commune with Him, for fellowship is more than hearing and thinking: it is to speak from the heart to Him, and for the heart to hear Him speak to us. “My Lord, can these lips speak any more unkindly since my very words are as the thorns and nails to Thee?” That cry, “I thirst,” must check the hasty word and choke the harsh utterance. My Lord, my Lord, shall I for whom Thou hast died find room in my heart for Thy murderers? Thy hands nailed for me upon the cross, do bind my hands from all that is foul and dishonest: Thy feet do seem to hold my feet from evil ways: Thy broken heart is the measure and meaning of my sin. Let my heart break, my Lord, sooner than I should go forth to forget Thy love and lightly to hurt and grieve Thee again.

So let us enter into the fellowship of His sufferings on our side. “My Lord, my Lord, I do loath the ills that have cost Thee so much. I am stricken and smitten with Thy shame. Lift me up, that I may be crucified with Thee. Thy love doth demand the utter and complete surrender of myself to Thee.”

And let us think tenderly and adoringly what this fellowship of His sufferings means to the dear Master. It is His solace and satisfaction. Then doth He see of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. It is good that we can heal those wounds of Calvary, and turn the cross into a very throne of grace, and the rugged nails into a golden sceptre that we do touch and live. Come, let us speak to Him. “Most blessed Lord, we fain would know in all the world of history and all the deeds of men what joy were of all to Thee the very sweetest. We long to know what should fill the cup of gladness to very overflowing with the richest wine that earth or Heaven can give. We fain would bring it to Thee.” I venture to think the gracious Master should say that this is earth’s and Heaven’s best, to come into a world of sin, and to be able to deliver it from its curse, and yet to lead men to repentance. To forgive, and yet to fill the soul with the hatred of the offence. To speak the pardon, and yet to make men hate sin more by being

pardoned than any penalty and any suffering could do. This surely is the triumph of God's wisdom and God's love. It is His joy fulfilled in the very fellowship of His sufferings.

This fellowship of His sufferings must compel the utter and complete surrender of ourselves to Him, that we may be conformed to His death. As if our hands and feet and all the life were given to Him as He was given up for us. During the hallowed quiet of this day let there be afresh and with all the heart a definite act of surrender. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." These words can never be spoken with such appeal and entreaty as in sight of the Cross of Christ.

And this fellowship of His sufferings must pass into praise. The Lord is never fully my salvation until He becomes my song. His joy is never full until our joy in Him is full. Let us during this day muse upon this great love until the fire kindle. *He loved me and gave Himself for me.* Think from what a height He came. Think, my soul, for thee to what a depth He stooped. Think of thy great salvation in Him—the past that is buried, never to be remembered against thee for ever. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Think of that great love of His as filling all the future with unspeakable blessedness. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." By the height and depth and length and breadth of Thy love let our souls be moved to a very hallelujah chorus—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities."

*The fellowship of His sufferings must pass into strength to endure.* There are some who have much petty persecution for Christ's sake. All the more hard to endure perhaps because it is so little. Scorn and taunt that you do not go in the way of others. The motives are misinterpreted: you are cut off from friendships that otherwise you could enjoy but for Christ's sake. Perhaps in business there is a loss because you are not ready to do as you are told everybody else does. Well, dear souls, find to-day fresh strength for endurance in the Cross. Like the disciples when they had been beaten by the council, go forth rejoicing that you are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. This is the opportunity of knowing Christ as you could not otherwise know Him. And this is the opportunity of showing your love to Him. Does not love dream of all kind of perils besetting its beloved that it may prove how resolute and how mighty it is? My brother, my sister, God knows how strong the current is that runs against you; how hard it is sometimes to fight the foes without and the traitors within. To-day

draw near and take again the oath of service. By that Cross of Christ, by the shame and curse of Calvary, pledge yourself to be His faithful soldier and servant. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

And, lastly, this fellowship of His sufferings should be to us an inspiration for service. The King of Heaven hath bent in pity over us, not scorning us, not condemning us, but taking upon Himself our curse that He might bear it in His own body on the tree. My brother, if we call Him Lord and Saviour, are we not bound to be like Him? Pity, deep yearning pity, for men and women must fill the heart. Help, eager help, that holds nothing but its own righteousness too much to part with, that he may uplift men. Surely now we need not despair of any since He has saved us. With a new love and a new eagerness for service must we go forth since He laid down His life for us, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH BERRY.

*“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.”—  
Acts ii. 32.*

THE tomb of Jesus is the critical point in the battle between faith and unbelief. Such is the opinion of many free-thinkers, and we do not wonder that the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus has been keenly and often attacked. We Christians need not and must not shirk the conflict at this point. Everything we hold dearest is at stake. If Jesus did not rise He was not divine, for He was “declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead.” Again, if Jesus did not rise from the dead we have no certainty of a future life. “They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” They loved and trusted Him in life. They fell asleep committing their souls to His keeping, but they trusted in a lie, and “have perished.” Our hopes of forgiveness depend upon His being raised for our justification; if He did not rise we are yet in our sins.

Two boys were playing one day near the edge of one of the New Zealand rivers. One little fellow fell in and was drowning. His brave comrade, who could swim, jumped in and tried to save the drowning boy. The two became entangled, and both perished. So Christ plunged into the river of death. He tried to save us. Did He succeed or fail? I want to see what evidence we have for believing that He did not fail. Our evidence shall be fetched from sources outside the four gospels. My reason for this is that free-thinkers are very much given to asserting that our historical groundwork for this great doctrine rests exclusively upon a few pages of the gospels, containing contradictory statements made by a few weak women and credulous men. Within the last few days I have read one of the latest sceptical books, which is already in the seventh edition. The writer takes just this ground about the Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus, and after a few pages of very confident assertion dismisses the doctrine as no longer credible. We are so far from accepting this conclusion, that we affirm that if the four gospels had never been written we should still have reason enough to continue to believe that “this Jesus hath God raised up.”

The river Mississippi is said to have, with its tributaries, 35,000 miles of navigable water. Yet trace it back far enough and you come to its source. I am thinking of a more wonderful river. It flows through every civilized land. It has tributaries in almost every village and hamlet not absolutely heathen. I mean of course the Christian Sunday. Trace it back through nearly nineteen centuries, and you find its origin at the tomb of Jesus. Now Jesus either rose from the dead or He did not. If He did not rise how

was this river started on its course? If there had never been a Guy Fawkes or a Gunpowder Plot, could anybody have set on foot the annual performances which still divert and amuse on the Fifth of November? All America thrills with excitement upon every Fourth of July, but if there had never been any Declaration of Independence, could these celebrations have had a beginning? Now a bonfire on the Fifth of November, or a festival on the Fourth of July, furnishes stronger proof of the reality of certain events in the past than any printed page could furnish. The page of history simply explains what the institution means. It is so with our Sunday. It had been in existence for years before a line of our gospels was written. If Christ had been left in the tomb, and a sacred day had been set apart in His memory, it would surely have been the sixth day—the day of His death, and not the first. Let those who deny that our Lord rose from the dead be good enough to tell us what *did* happen on that first day of the week. If the answer is more credible than the one we now have, I for one am ready to accept it.

Here is the Christian Church. You say that it was founded by Christ. When did He found the Church? Certainly not before His death. There was no church building or organization, or roll of membership when our Lord was executed. His death disheartened and disbanded His followers. No men seemed less likely than they to found anything, when their Master was laid in the tomb. Something certainly did take place within a short time which changed and broadened their opinions, and set them afame with quenchless zeal. The only account which they ever gave of this was that their Master rose, taught, commissioned and inspired them, and then went up to Heaven and baptized them with the Holy Ghost. If that is not true then we must believe that this Church was founded by a dead man! I can see no alternative explanation, except possibly this—that the Apostles founded the Church by repeating the sayings of Christ and recommending His example. That would be intelligible if it were true, but it is not. Read Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, and Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and compare these with the Sermon on the Mount, and you will see what I mean. Mrs. Ward makes Robert Elsmere, after his abandonment of the supernatural in Christianity, try to found a church in this way, but as Mr. Gladstone pointed out, the attempt had been made already—in Unitarianism—and failed. No; the Christian Church was not built upon the teaching of Christ, but upon His death and resurrection. “The gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved,” was . . . “first of all that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” The Apostles were surely in a position to know whether their Lord rose again or not, and they deliberately and with one accord staked

everything upon the assertion that He rose, and built the whole superstructure of Christianity upon it. What an act of incredible folly if there was even a doubt upon the question! The men who were capable of establishing Christianity and penning the New Testament, were surely incapable of the folly of erecting such a superstructure upon quicksand.

We are told that the gospels were written long after the resurrection is said to have taken place—so long in fact that their value as evidence is seriously discounted. Well, I am not disposed to argue that point just now. What I want you to see is, that the later the gospels, the more evident it is that the Church did not receive this doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus from them! When historical questions are in dispute great value is set upon contemporary letters. Happily we are in possession of such. Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth must have been written within thirty years of the crucifixion of Jesus. He says there that of the "five hundred brethren" to whom Jesus showed Himself, "the greater part" still remained. Less time had elapsed since Jesus was put to death, than has elapsed since the American Civil War. There were plenty people living to correct him if he was wrong. His ability and sincerity are beyond question. He traces his own conversion and apostleship to his vision of the risen Lord. This letter, too, shows how much difference of opinion and feeling there was in the Church upon many questions. There was a "Paul" party, an "Apollos" faction, and a "Peter" clique. Some even denied that there was "any resurrection of the dead" for them. But there was no party who denied or doubted the resurrection of Jesus. In that splendid chain of reasoning I. Cor. xv. 3-20, Paul grounds his argument upon their acceptance of this belief, and shows that they must also accept the conclusions. Take one example. "If there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen." You see Paul is not arguing here for the resurrection of Jesus—there was no need to do that because it was not called in question—but for our resurrection as resulting from His. This argument could be illustrated with equal force from other letters in the New Testament, but one is sufficient for my present object.

Recall now the scene at Pentecost. The place is Jerusalem the city in which Jesus had been publicly tried and executed and buried a few weeks before. Here is an enormous crowd assembled to listen to Peter. Does he attempt to prove to them that Jesus had risen from the dead? Not for a moment—it was not necessary. They knew that the preacher's testimony was true. Had this not been the case, Peter would have been torn limb from limb for making such an accusation. Instead of this they were "pricked to the heart, and cried, Men and brethren what shall we do?" Suppose that six weeks ago a man had been tried, executed, and buried in this city. Here are the judge who pronounced sentence, the jury who gave the verdict, the lawyers, the hangman, the under-

taker, and all who had taken any part. A preacher stands up in our midst and declares in the presence of a great crowd, that the condemned man was innocent; that his execution was a foul murder; and that this had been attested by his rising from the dead. If the audience acknowledged their guilt and manifested contrition, could the truth of the accusation be doubted? Yet we are told that the doctrine of our Lord's resurrection rests upon the evidence of "a few weak women and credulous men"!

The sincerity and honesty of the apostolic witnesses is now generally admitted, but another way has been found of discounting their testimony. "They were deluded and excited. The belief that their Master would rise so wrought upon their nerves that the hope fulfilled itself, and they honestly believed that they saw their risen Lord." No doubt men and women have been so wrought upon and deluded, but is this such a case? Who are the men and women of whom this is said? Was Paul in such a state of mind when on the way to Damascus the Lord spoke to him? Could a man be at the same time a fierce and bitter persecutor of Jesus, and in an ecstatic state brought about by the hope that He whom he persecuted would rise from the dead? Picture these women, dear souls, going to the grave with precious spices to embalm His body, and think of them if you can, as expecting Him every moment to walk out of His grave alive! The disciples, who in their necessity betook themselves again to the commonplace calling of fishermen, were they in a frenzy of excitement sufficient to create a phantom? The two men on the way to Emmaus who "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," but had now given up hope, were they in the suggested mental condition? Or Thomas, when he stoutly declared that nothing less than his hand in the wounded side would convince him that his Master lived—was he expecting Him to reappear? Besides, phantoms don't talk; ghosts vanish under cross-examination; but Jesus talked and taught these men for several weeks, and in many different circumstances. To me, these suggested explanations of the resurrection are miracles of credulity surpassing in wonder this great miracle of our faith.

Nor need we be troubled by the discrepancies in the gospel narratives of which so much is made. That one gospel should speak of an earthquake, and the others say nothing about it: that we should read now of two women, now of three, and now of one: or that we should be told of one angel in one place, and two angels in another, is just what might be expected in a graphic narrative of an exciting and continually-shifting scene. These gospels were written not for evidence, but for edification. I think it is even a striking illustration of the firm hold which the belief of our Lord's resurrection had upon those for whom the gospels were first written, that the writers did not feel any necessity for making all the details of their story harmonize. All agree upon the *fact*, and nothing else is of importance. Our hope is no way affected by our believing in one

angel or more; in three women or less. Discrepancies in detail are often evidence of real truthfulness. The standard work in America upon the laws of evidence was written by Mr. Greenleaf, an able and profound lawyer, of whom the *London Law Journal* says that he has "shed more light upon existing laws of evidence than all the lawyers together who adorn the courts of Europe." Mr. Greenleaf bent his energies upon a work which he called "*The testimony of the evangelists examined by the rules of evidence administered in courts of justice.*" These witnesses are there submitted to a thorough and searching cross-examination with the result of an undoubted conviction of their integrity.

But we are told that "experience is against this doctrine. We have so many millions of deaths every year, but no resurrections, therefore the probabilities are millions to one against this doctrine being true." There would be great force in this objection if these millions were such as He. If even there were but one Jesus in each century and the grave held Him fast, we might then doubt whether our Lord really arose, but there has never been a second Christ. And when we remember who and what He was we rather feel that it "was not possible that He should be holden" of death. The wonder would have been if He had *not* risen from the dead.

Does anyone still hold out against this belief, and demand like Thomas that he will not be convinced except upon the evidence of his own senses? Think what that demand means. To satisfy it, Christ would need to become incarnate once in every generation and to die and rise again in every town and village in the world, during the lifetime of each inhabitant! The impossibility of meeting such a demand ought to convince of its unreasonableness. Those who stood round the grave of Lazarus had "the evidence of their senses." They did not deny either that Lazarus was dead or that he was called back to life, "but some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles." There is a sense, however, in which this demand for evidence may be met. Paul saw the risen Christ but once, on the way to Damascus, but through all his Christian life he experienced an indwelling Christ. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—such was the testimony of his experience. You may have the same evidence upon the same terms. Have you a burdened heart? take the burden to Him, and you will know that He lives by the rest He imparts.

## GUIDANCE AND GLORY.

BY THE REV. H. C. G. MOULE.

*“Thou shalt guide me with thy council, and afterwards receive me with glory.”*—PSALM lxxiii. 24.

SUCH was the hope of Asaph, such the repose of his thoughts, such the strength of his heart, when he issued out of his fierce, dark conflict with perplexity and doubt. You remember what a conflict that had been. There are few things quite like it in the Bible (save indeed the great book of Job) for letting us see how fully God's Word understands, so to speak, the workings and tortures of a thoughtful mind perplexed and baffled by religious mystery. Asaph, a pious worshipper and servant and follower of the covenant God, labored and pined under affliction and earthly loss; and, looking round him, in the world of his own times, he saw man after man who was anything but godly, yet who prospered, flourished, heaped up wealth, and drew after him a host of obsequious admirers. And he knew that his God had promised prosperity to the righteous, and adversity to the wicked; and he could not square the facts with the promise; and he could not and would not crush his sense of perplexity; and so, who can wonder? he was tortured with the most dreadful doubts. A whisper told him that religion was vain; that God's promise was a dream.

Have we ever known such feelings? If so, we will be tender with Asaph, and tender with minds and hearts that are tried like Asaph's now—as many, many are. It is an awful trial. The first injection into the thoughts of doubt about God and His Word is a terrible crisis in the story of a vigorous and sensitive mind; it is a scar never quite smoothed away on earth. If we have felt it, we cannot forget it. If we have felt it, we must indeed feel and pray for those who feel it now; asking for them in tender sympathy, what we are so glad to experience ourselves, that, having tasted Asaph's agony, they may grasp Asaph's rest and joy, through faith.

I do not stay now to dwell on the *weak side* of Asaph's case. Only observe that a weak side there was. He owns it himself. He uses strong language: “So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.” Forcible expressions! They are not those of a man who thinks that doubt is a thing to be proud of; far from it. They own that clearer thinking and wider observation would have given him a very different view of God's ways. He would have seen more, had he looked deeper. He would have realized that the saint, however afflicted, has God, here and hereafter—God the soul cause of all good—wholly His for ever. He would have remembered that the sinner, however successful, “in his end shall

be a fool," going down in an eternal failure among the lost, into the gulf. He would have seen that the saint, at the worst, gets "the best of both worlds"; all the real good out of his path on earth, all the resulting glory in his home in Heaven. All this, and more, he owns to us, he might and should have seen. And doubters now may learn from Asaph the useful lesson that not too much thinking makes men sceptics, but too little; that to plume oneself upon thinking doubtfully about religion is like being vain of short sight and defective hearing. It is to forget, at least, how totally unable we are to grasp and explain *the whole* of the Lord's plan and providence. His plan takes in so vast a range, His dealings so run off into eternity in their orbit, that no wonder we cannot know now, except in part. "So foolish was I, and ignorant"—so *foolish*, matched with Thy supreme wisdom; so *ignorant*, matched with Thy infinite knowledge of all being and all life.

But I do not dwell on this; I take rather this text, to let it speak to us of the deepest yet simplest secret of Asaph's final peace. That secret was the casting of himself, in perfect personal trust, wholly upon the Lord God, that very God whose providence had so utterly perplexed him.

Personal confidence in God—that is to say, faith—brought his soul to its senses, that is to say, brought him to his knees. Something led him, across all doubts, to look God in the face; and then his doubts fled, because the material for them was gone. He could not explain the universe, but he knew its Maker. He could not unravel providence, but he could look straight at Jehovah-Jireh. And looking at Him, what did he see? Not only the solution of a riddle to his intellect, but the satisfaction of the cravings of his heart. He loved God because he really saw God. That eternal being was now to Asaph immensely dear, as well as wholly to be trusted. He not only bowed before Him, but clung to Him. Let Him, because it was He, do what seemed Him good. Let Asaph's soul turn, though in the darkness, to its rest. God knew the riddle. God held the key. Let God keep it. Asaph can leave it with Him.

I hope there are many of us who have taken Asaph's path out of the slough of despond. "Look to the Lord with steadfast eye, and fight with hell by faith." Happy, if we have done so. "His ways are past finding out;" but we have found out Him. Some riddle of providence tried us; some great sorrow came, some heavy disappointment, some utterly inexplicable succession of troubles; or some doctrine of grace pressed our mind hard, or some difficulty in God's Word made us think, in a whisper, "What if the Bible is wrong after all?" Well we cannot, perhaps, see the end of the puzzle. A little clearer thought may yet do it. But *we cannot do it yet*. Nevertheless, we can see even now something still more to the purpose; we see standing in the midst of the labyrinth the Lord of peace Himself. Whatever the trial be, be it of sorrow

or of joy—sorrow tempting us to think too narrowly and hardly, joy tempting us to think too vaguely and loosely—amidst all the perplexity, there, in the midst of it, is the Lord Himself; and that is enough for our soul's peace. “I am, nevertheless, continually with Thee. I know not, but Thou knowest. I fly to Thee. I bury myself in Thee. If I must look on what perplexes me, my point of view shall be the bosom of my God.”

Only observe in passing, but as a point of first importance, that “my God,” in such a sentiment, must mean, not a God imagined, but *the God revealed*. Unbelievers can talk of “the bosom of a Father and a God”; but they really touch only the soft cloud of their own ideas. Go you, if you would grasp *real* consolation, where Asaph went (ver. 17), even to the *Sanctuary*. Go, that is, to God’s own revelation of His person, and to God’s own pledges of His faithfulness. In brief, go straight to Jesus, who is the manifestation of God, for He is God made man; and who is, by His blessed death and resurrection, the supreme proof of all true religion, the great Seal of the Empire under every promise.

Asaph did not go out wandering with his doubts. He brought them home. He went not to his own philosophy, but to the *sacra*-*sanctuary*. There stood the altar and the ark; grand pledges and proofs that the Lord God of the prophets had done wonders, very real ones, in past days for His people, and so might be entirely trusted still. So too must it be with you if you would climb to Asaph’s hope. Take the Lord’s means. Use His Word. Get acquainted with Him from the Word. And, remember, what He was, He is; the same faithful Father to His believing servant now, as to His banished, or tortured, or martyred people of old time. “*Acquaint thyself with him, and be at peace.*” So Asaph did, so do thou. In all time of thy tribulation, in all time of thy wealth, acquaint thyself with Him.

But in pondering our text, I wish specially to observe, not merely the general frame of Asaph’s mind, through grace, as he looked around him on human life; not merely his general rest, and peace, and patience; but his *particular, detailed* comfort and strength, and staff, and rod. Come nearer to this man, this saint, so tried, but so triumphant. Come nearer. Do not merely watch him on his knees, but hear what he is saying on them. Listen to him. He is speaking very specially. It is not only “All is well,” but, “I will *trust Thee* with myself, for life and death.” Listen, and learn, and follow. Observe this, “*Mr. Standfast*”; he is on his knees on the enchanted ground. Do thou likewise, O believer, under any trial of faith in the unseen. Dost thou groan under vexation, pain, loss, solitude? Art thou almost soul-stifled in these glooms and shadows? Down to thy knees on the enchanted ground; look to thy God, see Him plain, trust Him, grasp Him, love Him, and be strong again for life and death. Art thou in even greater peril in time of wealth? Is all fair and soft about thee? Has the

very bounty of the eternal hand hidden from thee the hand itself? Art thou secretly taking earth to be thy rest, and something less than the Lord to be thy portion? Down again to thy knees on the enchanted ground; see the face of thy God again; grasp Him anew; trust Him; put into His hands thy *soul*; put into His hands thy *way*.

Let us listen to this praying, conquering saint again. Watch him as he flies to the very God whose providence had so distressed him. Let us mark his two certainties about that God, and make those two certainties our very own.

1. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." Here is his certainty about God, and his happy resolve for himself, for *this present time*. His certainty about God—"Thou shalt guide." Yes, he is sure of this. This invisible Eternal, with this intricate universe on His hands, will yet, with those hands, be quite ready and quite sure to *guide me*. He will think upon me. He will count my hairs. He will know my soul. He will minutely arrange my circumstances, my duties, my path. And again, here is Asaph's happy resolve about himself: I will let the Lord do it. I will trust Him to do it. Does He offer to guide me? He shall guide me indeed. Does He offer His counsel, His advice to me? Does He whisper, "This is the way," when I turn to the right hand in self-will, to the left hand in self-indulgence? Does He offer me His counsel? Then indeed I will take it. I will not verify the proverb, in my dealings with *Him*, "That the easiest thing is to give counsel, the hardest is to take it." I will take it, and be glad. I will dare to submit myself under His hand; I will dare to be lifted on by His hand, because it is His hand. I will take His advice, through all seeming reasons against it, because the tender voice, the faithful voice, is His.

Now, only grace can do this. But grace can. Experience often illustrates the remark that it is harder to trust God with the way than to trust Him with the soul. But He, by His promised Spirit, can make you and make me honestly trust Him with our way, and really listen to be guided by His counsel. Ask, then, for full power to do it, if you are His indeed. He waits to be gracious; seek and find the grace to let His grace have its way.

There will be no peace, in your inmost relations with God, without this willingness to be guided. But there will be, *with it*. Oh! confide in Him indeed. Make quite sure that He never willingly gives one *unwelcome* counsel to His listening people. True willingness to do His will He often meets and crowns with most blessed proofs of His divine willingness to do the will of His saints, where it is for their good indeed. How profound is the significance of those words, "Delight thyself in the *Lord*, and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart!" But, however, trust the counsel. Confide your way to Him. Unreservedly ask His advice about the next

thing, and the next. Not like the elders in Ezekiel, who went to ask counsel through the prophet, but kept their heart-idols standing safe upon the inward throne. Go in sincerity to ask, and to take, His counsel; and indeed you shall find that saying true—"My words do good to him that walketh uprightly."

But there is the last clause yet to look at ere we close :

2. "Afterward thou shalt receive me to glory." Here, let us not doubt it, Asaph looks up and on to an everlasting home with God, after a path of guidance by God. I know what doubts and questions are raised about this view. Men have discussed anxiously how much the old saints knew of the hope of glory. But here *is* the hope of glory. The whole Psalm implies it. Asaph bases his comfort about God's mysterious ways very much on just *this*, that the *end* of the ungodly is darkness, and the *end* of the righteous is light. And anyhow for us, us who read this inspired saint's words now, those words are steeped and glorified in the Gospel. Jesus and the Resurrection are designed, for us, to shine on the Psalms and to shine from them. Whatever Asaph *thought*, this is what the inspiring Spirit *meant*: Jesus and Heaven.

Such then is the trustful, obedient pilgrim's end, his endless end. The Counsellor, the Adviser, here—the Eternal Friend who often had to check wandering, and disappoint mistaken wishes, and cross ill-laid schemes, here—will there, after His discipline, throw off the reserve no longer needed, and become, in all the deep sunshine of eternal happiness, the glorifier of the soul that has followed His counsel. "He hath, after ye have suffered awhile, called you to His eternal glory." "Afterward," blessed word, "afterward thou shalt receive me with glory."

"Thou shalt *receive* me." "Thou shalt *take* me," as Asaph's Hebrew simply runs, "Thou shalt guide me, then Thou shalt take me! the closing act of Thy guidance shall be, not to leave me at the gate, but to take me at it. The result of the process will be, to pass into unutterable nearness with Thee. The voice behind me will become the smile, the welcoming countenance, before me. So shall I be for ever with the Lord. Where Thou art, there shall Thy follower be; for Thou wilt come and take me to Thyself."

"Thou wilt receive me *with glory*." Yes, not with peace only, though it will be with peace; not with rescue or relief only; not with pardon and legal security only. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified!" The salvation which is in Christ Jesus is, in its very essence, "with eternal glory." The "patient continuance in well doing," the following on and on, listening to God's advice, doing the next thing which He recommends to be done, is to be followed, as the bud is followed by the flower, by "glory, honor, immortality." Yes, bear it well in mind. The path of His counsel

alone leads to the exaltations of His glory, but it *does* lead there, and it does lead to nothing less.

“ Come on, my friends, let’s mend our pace  
To glory, glory, glory ;  
There’s room enough in that blest place  
Where Jesus dwells in glory.”

I quote from an old hymn, not in the modern style at all, but to my own memory and soul instinct and fragrant with thoughts of those who through faith and patience—through trusting, and taking, and acting on, God’s advice, inherit the promises of glory ; who obtained this testimony, that they walked with God, and then—they were not, for God took them.

Their faith let us follow, considering the end of their course of life : Thou wilt take me, with glory.

## AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

BY THE VEN. F. W. FARRAR, D.D.,  
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*“And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?”*—GEN. iv. 9.

WE hear very much in these days of what is called the “Higher Criticism,” that is, the application of certain literary and historic methods to the study of Scripture; and it is viewed by a great many in its results with much vague, but unnecessary, alarm. One thing is certain, that no amount of criticism can ever take away from Scripture that moral depth and that spiritual intensity which make its lessons exceed in wisdom those which can be derived from the lessons of all the sages. Whether, for instance, we take this story of Cain and Abel for literal history, or for profound allegory, the results remain the same. It is full of the deepest lessons. In the envy of Cain, in the rapidity with which the slumbering grudge broke into the fiery serpent of murder, in the revelation that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, in the fact that the collapse of a man from his original innocence into apostasy was so fearfully swift, that of the first beings born into the world the one became a murderer and the other his murdered victim—in all these things we have lessons of tremendous import; and if we want to find the comment upon them, we find it in all national history, in all war, in sedition, in riot, in discontent, in things which we may see in our common streets. We see it in murders, in every kind of disorder and violation of law; we see it in the internecine struggles of Capital and Labor; we see it as the red fool fury of revolution with its lullaby the carmagnole, and toy the guillotine; we see it in that devilish type of manhood which is created when all the passions of men’s minds seem changed into one incarnate rage and one incarnate hatred; we see it, I say, wherever we turn, in all the records of our daily newspapers, at once the fruits of the evil passions described in this passage, and also the most tremendous lessons of the peril of neglecting those passions, and of overlooking the consequences to which they inevitably lead.

Now I must pass over all the other significance of this narrative, and must fix your minds upon the sequel. Abel lay dead upon the earth, and the innocent flowers of the earth first shuddered under the dew of blood, and the Lord said unto man, “Where is Abel thy brother?” and he answered—because the first murderer is also the

first liar—"I know not"; and he added—for the first murderer is the first egotist—"Am *I* my brother's keeper?" The voice of the Lord swept away the callous question and the shameless falsehood, and He said unto him, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground"; and Cain was driven forth from the presence of the Lord into the land of his exile, with the brand of the wrath of heaven upon his soul and upon his brow.

*Unconscious Hypocrisy.*

Now leaving the narrative altogether, let us consider the significance of it all these milleniums afterwards. I can only do so in the most brief and inadequate way, and yet I think that we ought to have brought before us considerations which are well worthy of our most earnest thought. We each of us ask in turn, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And God answers to every one of us, "Yes, thou art thy brother's keeper." And the world, with all its might, declares in answer, "No, we are not our brother's keeper." And the vast majority of ordinary conventional, compromising Christians, all the sects and churches of the Laodiceans, the luke-warm, the facing-both-ways, the neither hot nor cold, the neither one thing nor the other, while they do hesitatingly with their lips say, "Yes, we are our brother's keeper," yet, for the most part, live exactly as if they were not. Did not Christ Himself point out this wide unconscious hypocrisy when He described men as divided into two classes—first of all, the bold rebels, who, when bidden to go to work in the vineyard, answered, "I will not"; and on the other hand, the smooth and decent hypocrites who said, "I go sir," but went not? We ordinary Christians, let the truth be confessed, are a very poor set. There is reason for the question of a French writer, "Christ hath come, but when cometh salvation?" We have preached Christ for centuries,

Until at last men learn to scoff,  
So few seem any better off.

Now when we ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" some men interpose a sort of excuse in the words of the sneering lawyer, Who is my brother? or, Who is my neighbor? And the answer comes to us as it came to him, All men are our brothers, especially all who sin and suffer, and therefore need our help; all who lie murdered like Abel; all who, like the sick and wounded traveller, are left by the thieves and murderers of the world; all who are neglected by the cold priest and scrupulously sacrificing Levite; all those who but for us would perish from neglect.

Yes; and when we in our carelessness injure our fellow-men, when we injure them by our lives, by our sneers, by slanders and calumnies, by envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, by our intrigues, by our want of thought, by our want of heart, by lust

of gain, by absorbing selfishness, then we are the inheritors of the spirit of the first murderer. But let us confine our thoughts to-day to those who most pressingly need our efforts and our assistance; to all the poor, the hungry, the miserable, the suffering, the outcast. In them, depend upon it, we must find, if we are to be true Christians, the great sphere of our duty. I shall not enter into any question as to the origin of their existence, or of our responsibility; but I only say that if we believe Scripture at all we must recognize the immensity of this duty, and that, if we neglect it at our pleasure, we also are neglecting it at our peril. This was the great, the incessant lesson of all the mighty Hebrew prophets; this is repeated again and again in page after page of Scripture by the Evangelists and Apostles. This is the incessant lesson of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

### *The "Crime" of Giving.*

We are told again and again in these days by callous and worldly persons that we are guilty of a positive crime if we give a penny to a beggar; and we are lectured with the utmost possible severity about our "maudlin sentimentality" if, moved by compassion, we give a subscription, for instance, to the starving families of men who are on strike. Well, let us by all means attend to our political economy; let us, if it be necessary, tame down the splendid passion of the prophet, lest it should tend to Socialism. Let us check the impulse of the philanthropist lest it should interfere with the ratepayer; but in Heaven's name let us remember that after we have talked and urged and insisted upon these lessons of political economy the majestic claims of charity are by no means exhausted.

Many men seem to think that they have done their duty to society when they prove to their own satisfaction that those men whose passionate enthusiasm of humanity has led them to plunge into all kinds of schemes for the amelioration of their fellow-men are nothing better than contemptible fanatics. There are men working in the midst of us who have done more for mankind with their little fingers than ninety-nine hundredths of us have done with our whole loins. There are men working among us whom we are taught to regard with a sneer, who have saved the miserable arabs of our streets by thousands, who have gone out into the slums, who, from one end of the world to the other, have endeavored at least to preach the Gospel to the lowest of the poor; and if we are to look down upon these men from the whole height of our conventionalism, and of our inferiority, let us at least at the same time confess that there lives a surer light of God in them, whatever may have been their superficial mistakes, than there does in whole armies of men whose only functions it seems to be to criticise and to sneer. For my part I have no hesitation in saying that it seems that these men are far more deserving the gratitude of mankind, as they deserve and re-

ceive the approval of God, than very many of those who are their critics. *They* have not merely sat still and criticised; they have gone out into the midst of the battle; they have rescued the perishing; they have cared for the dying; they have toiled and wrought, and fought and overcome, and assuredly they shall have their reward. Even a statesman, a poet, a man of the world like the late American Ambassador, James Russell Lowell, addressed words of solemn warning to us in the well-known lines called "The Parable"—

Said Christ, our Lord, "I will go and see  
How the men, My brethren, believe in Me."

He is welcomed by the kings and the priests with all their state and solemn pomp of worship:

Great organs surged thro' arches dim  
Their jubilant floods in praise of Him !  
And in church, and palace, and judgment hall,  
He saw His image high over all.  
But still, wherever His steps they led,  
The Lord in sorrow bent down His head ;  
And from under the heavy foundation stones  
The Son of Mary heard bitter groans.  
Have ye founded your thrones and altars then  
On the bodies and souls of living men ?  
And think ye that building shall endure  
Which shelters the noble and crushes the poor ?

In vain they plead their customs, and their services, and their religiosity :

Then Christ sought out an artisan,  
A low-browed, stunted, haggard man.  
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin  
Pushed from her faintly want and sin.  
These let He in the midst of them,  
And as they drew back their garment hem  
For fear of defilement Lo ! here, said He,  
The images ye have made of Me !

There is surely a most solemn warning in those words and the quarter from which they come. That there is on every side of us a vast sea of misery which rolls its turbid waves to our very doors; that there are thousands living in these our great crowded cities on the dim borderland of destitution; that there are among us thousands of the unemployed, many of whom are not, as some would persuade us, mere lazy imposters; that there are thousands, and tens of thousands, of poor, miserable, little children who soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime; that there is everywhere around us a vast mass of suffering humanity, which looks to us with its silent appeal; that there is still among us the demon of drink, creating infamies daily in our cities such as could hardly be exceeded in literal truth by Dahomey or Ashantee, and still raking into its bursting coffers streams of gold, much of which are red with the blood of men, and swollen with the tears of women—that all this is around us is patent to every eye.

And God will work no miracle to alter this state of things. He works through human means. If we neglect these evils they will remain neglected and uncured until the pit swallow them, but we shall be held responsible for them. It is vain for us to ask, "Are we our brother's keeper?" In spite of political economists; in spite of superfine theories of chilly wisdom; in spite of trenchantly contemptuous leading articles which treat of propositions dictated, at any rate, by sincerity, as if they were, to quote their own language "mere verbal poultices," "mere sickly fluidity," "mere hysterick gush"—I say, in spite of these influences, which tend against the passion and the enthusiasm of humanity, God will ask every one of us, with such a glance as struck Simon Magus with a curse, or Gehazi with leprosy, "What hast thou done? Smooth religionist, orthodox Churchman, self-satisfied worldling, befringed and be-phylacteried Pharisee, that voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the ground."

*Cain in the Nineteenth Century.*

Now this awful reproach is met by the world with a shout of reclamation. The respectable say, "Is it possible that we, the learned, the rich, the respectable, the religious, the refined—is it possible that *we* are responsible for this state of things, and that we are our brother's keepers in this sense?" And all the worldly and the scornful say, "What have we to do with these pariahs, with these hangers-on of the gin-shops, with these noisy and blatant demagogues, with these idle and worthless ruffians?"

Well, the question is asked in various ways. Let us consider some of them. Some people ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" simply in coarse ignorance. They are like Tennyson's Northern Farmer, steeped to the lips in the hardness of selfish money-making, and they say, "Take my word for it, the poor in a loomp is bad." It may not be often that that thought is expressed with the same brutal and ignorant frankness; but how often are we told, "If they are so poor, if they are so destitute, it is at least their own fault." Well St. James had something to say to those respectable rich Jews of his day. "Know ye not that God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, but ye have despised the poor?"

Then, again, some may put the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" with a sort of sham and scornful compassion. Take these lines:—

In dirt and sin ye all were born,  
In sin and dirt ye all were bred;  
Not yours in truth, not yours to scorn  
The offal which is board and bed,  
Wallow until your lives be through,  
Satan's God-children take your due.

Take gold, disperse the rich man's store,  
Take it and satisfy your need ;  
Then misbeget some millions more  
For our posterity to feed.  
We cannot govern worlds by rule,  
Or put a continent to school.

I know not who is the author of these lines ; they are, I believe, anonymous : I cut them out of a newspaper. But I say to you that such language, even to the most destitute suffering, is to indulge in a spirit which is the very antithesis to the tenderness and to the compassion of Christ. Such a spirit of scorn and loathing robs even charity of its compassionateness, and makes a charitable gift something more odious and something more maddening than a blow.

Then, again, there are many who ask the question, "Am I my brother's keeper ?" in a sort of indifferent despair. How often do we hear men say, "Well, there is a great deal of suffering, but what good can *I* do ? What is the use of trying to do anything ?" And then they invariably quote the passage of Deuteronomy which we hear so often, "The poor shall never cease out of the land." How is it that they invariably forget the context of those words, "The poor shall never cease out of the land, therefore—*therefore*, I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy in thy land. Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him, because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto."

A writer who has done much to quicken our sympathies in this generation, Mr. Ruskin, has said, "I know that there are many who think the atmosphere of misery which wraps the lower orders of Europe more closely every day as natural a phenomenon as a hot summer. But, God forbid ! There are ills which flesh is heir to, and troubles to which man is born, but the troubles which he is born to are as sparks which fly upwards, not as flames burning to the nethermost hell. The poor we must have with us always, and sorrow is inseparable from any hour of life ; but we may make their poverty such as shall inherit the earth, and the sorrow such as shall be hallowed by the hand of the Comforter with everlasting comfort. We can, if we will, but shake off this lethargy and dreaming that is upon us, and take the pains to think and act like men."

#### *Domestic Sloth.*

Let me mention another way only in which the question may be asked, "Am I my brother's keeper ?" It is asked, as I have said, in coarse ignorance ; it is asked in sham compassion ; it is asked in indifferent despair ; it is asked also with an unreality and domestic sloth. It does not challenge God with the question,

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” if it acts in every respect as if it were not. The poets, who are our great moral teachers, have seen that fact. Coleridge speaks to us of

The sluggard Pity’s vision weaving tribe,  
Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,  
Nursing in some delicious solitude  
Their dainty loves and slothful sympathies.

And Wordsworth speaks to us as living in days—

When good men  
On every side fall off we know not how  
To selfishness, disguised in gentle names  
Of peace, and quiet, and domestic love.

There, my friends, is a terrible danger for us all; it is the narrow fascination of domesticity. We think we can never do enough for our wives and for our children. We are apt to think that public life is only a thing which need not be attended to because of the languid virtue of providing for our families. Lacordaire, the great French orator, and Tocqueville, the great French statesman, both point out the immense danger there is lest we should limit our duty to the narrow circle of our own families. Only the worst men are actuated by that kind of selfish individualism which has been described as the *egoïsme à soi*—mere personal egoism. Vast numbers are actuated by that slightly expanded selfishness which has been called *egoïsme à plusieurs*—egoism simply expanded to members of our own families. Every one must be on guard against it. We belong, not only to families, but to the collective life, to the collective being; we must, therefore, make a stand against that narrow fascination which induces us to forget our duties as citizens and as men. We must help; we must not look on indifferent to all the woes and miseries of men around us. We must not be as churlish Nabal, saying, “There be many servants nowadays that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my wine and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?” We must not be like Dives, arrayed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, while Lazarus lies neglected, and, in all but vain words, unpitied at our doors. We must not be like the old Epicurean poet, Lucretius, who said it was sweet, when the winds were sweeping the waters into storm, in some great sea, to watch the dread toiling of another from the shore.

### Work or Sneers?

The feeling of the Christian must be the very opposite of this. We must man the lifeboat, and if we are not strong enough to row

we must try to steer, and if we cannot steer we may at least help to launch the lifeboat; and if we must leave that for stronger hands, then—

As one who stands upon the shore,  
And sees the lifeboat go to save;  
And, all too weak to take an oar,  
I send a cheer across the wave.

The weakest, the meanest, and the commonest way of all is to sit still and criticise; to say, "It is an unfit lifeboat," "It is badly made," "It will not secure its purpose," "The poor wretches on the wreck are dead already," "We cannot save them," "We are only endangering other lives," "These are not the fit men to row," "They are quite the wrong persons." Worst and wickedest way of all is to sneer, to call names, to discourage, to try in every way to suppress and injure those who are doing the work which we ourselves are not doing. Surely at the very least we ought to attempt something to help the shipwrecked mariners, and to encourage those who are toiling for them as we are *not*. We are bound to help; we are bound to sympathize; at the very lowest we are bound to *give*.

In conclusion, let us be sure of this, that character, and not creed, that active service, and not profession or form, is the ultimate test of all things with God. It is love which is the fulfilling of the law. If we would enter into life we must keep the Commandments. That was the one test with God of all orthodoxy, of all Churchmanship, of everything which constitutes the kingdom of heaven. If we have not *that*, we may come before God, and say that we are members of the only right organization; that we alone hold the right opinions about the sacraments, or about the Scriptures, or about the priesthood; that we alone attend to all the ordinances of religion scrupulously and faithfully; yet all these things, if unaccompanied by love, by service, by active endeavor for our fellow-men, will be to Him as valueless—nay, as hateful—as the mint and anise and cummin of the arrogant and exclusive Pharisees and priests, who murdered the Christ for whom they professed to look.

After all is said and done, there is but one test with God of orthodoxy, of catholicity, of membership of the kingdom of heaven; a test which sweeps away nine-tenths of the falsity of artificial religionism—it is "He that doeth righteousness is righteous." And righteousness in the eyes of God consists in love to our fellow-men as shown in love to Him. "He that doeth righteousness is born of God."

## IMITATION OF CHRIST.

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*“For even hereunto were ye called ; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”*  
—I. PETER ii. 21.

NOTHING is harder than suffering, and nothing higher than imitation of Christ. Yet the two things are here bound together. If we would follow Him, we must suffer as He did—suffering is part of the likeness and grows out of it. Jesus lived to be imitated ; we live to imitate. He left to us an example of moral loveliness and simplicity, of spiritual perfection and excellence, and we have to follow His footsteps. Often it may be afar, or even an immeasurable distance behind, yet it is always certain that the end can be reached. There is a massive gentleness—an excellent and infinite grace and glory in Him and in His character. Time was needed to make manifest what it contained. The men and the ages that stood nearest to Him did not see all we can now see in Him and in His actions. He had, indeed, marvellous strength ; it seemed as if He were a “bruised reed,” yet He was a reed that evil in all its forms could neither bend nor break. He appeared only as “smoking flax,” yet the flax that smoked was a light which the darkness of the world could not quench, which, indeed, quenched that darkness. Yet the strength that was in Him was not simply sufficient for Himself ; it became transparent, transformed into us, forming within us great virtues akin to His own. His has, indeed, been a fruitful character, a parent of multitudinous characters akin to His own, a creator of higher and nobler virtues than have come to man through any other source.

We were to follow His footsteps, and though it be faultily, distantly, rudely, we have still tried to follow. Beside Him we may be like children trying to copy the color, the marvellous form and expression, Raphael has given to his women. But still, in the very trial and its failures lies the path to success. He has left us an example—ours is to follow in His steps.

There is nothing more sure or certain than that man can best be cultivated by imitation ; that it is copying the great and beautiful type of example that educates man. It is only the few and the elect and the rare that can be original—the mass must be imitators ; and even as regards the originals they become models by working after a model or an idea. Men have defined art as the imitation of nature, but the nature it imitates is not, of course, nature devoid of life

that lies behind man, but the beautiful nature transfigured by mind that lives within him. The supreme genius in art is the man that sees furthest into nature, and gives most of himself to the nature that he sees. He can make us feel that in a scene that is just prosaic to us lies a light that was never on sea or shore, and he can make us feel the inspiration and the poet's dream. To a man trained after a great master, the nature that is to be imitated is a nature transfigured and made, as it were, divine. To one race, God gave the sense of beauty. The Greek read the meaning of the "human form divine," expressed it in his art, and bequeathed his gift to all posterity. When the rude barbarian made an end of Greek beauty, and buried it under its own ruins, the very sense of grace and shapeliness and seemliness seemed to die out of the mind of men. When, in later days, under the ruins the shapely bust, the beautiful head, the rare and exquisite form of the hero and of the god were discovered, there came back to men a new feeling for art, and by copying the antique, by imitating the Greek, he regained his lost sense of beauty.

### *Man's Progress towards God.*

So in an order by Himself, infinitely higher than the order of ourselves, stands the man Jesus Christ. Man's lost sense of God, man's lost sense of spiritual loveliness, come back to him in the presence of Christ; and as he copies he is cultivated, as he imitates he grows like the Divine, for the highest region in which cultivation by imitation can be seen is religious. Yet there, too, it is a thing of nature, though nature at her highest and purest. Man is to be an imitator of God, for he is, as it were, of the stock of God; he bore the Divine image and had the divine superscription before the image was defaced and the superscription effaced, but the ruined image and superscription are both restored. Man in order to be godly must be God-like, and his God-likeness is a matter of nature; because we are of God's kin, we are of God's kind. Mind from highest to lowest is still mind; the divine and the human may be infinitely distant, yet the distance is of degree, not of nature. Within the kingdom of nature there are divisions where things approach and even touch, and yet are never inter-confused. The mineral does not change into the vegetable; the vegetable is not transformed into the animal; the animal does not grow into the man, but in the kingdom of mind, between the highest, the Maker of the universe, and the lowest, looking through the hardly human eye of the savage, there is an infinite distance in degree, but there is no absolute difference of kind between Shakespeare's fancy's sweetest child and the almost brutal Kaffir; between Newton reading with piercing eye into the mechanism of heaven and the hardly articulate Australian there may intervene what seems an impassable gulf, but it is a gulf that time and opportunity and culture can bridge.

Give the thousands of years of training to the savage that the civilized man has had, and he is savage no more—he, too, stands up, civilized man. So between God and man there is and ever must be an infinite distance. Yet the progressive nature of created mind makes it an infinite impossibility that mind shall ever approach towards a divine that cannot be reached, yet which it ever has in view. He who comes as man into the world is just a little lower than the angels; give him the angel's opportunity and time, and there is no angelic space he will not cover, no path he will not tread, no end he will not gain. Man thus capable of infinite progress, progression indefinite, is man by imitation, can be cultivated, made the image of the Divine.

Since, then, man's kinship to God involves the capability of likeness to God, the main point needed is the image of the Divine, the apparent manifest copy of the Eternal. In the old law it was said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." Yet that God was just, as it were man's own notion of the Divine. It did not stand manifest, incorporate, incarnate, before heaven, but the very image of God had this strength and distinctive quality. He also was the Son of Man, the true and perfect image of the Eternal, and at the same time the true and perfect image of the Temple. Here you will observe that, just because of this, Christ is the most imitable of all characters. He is the one Being in history that all historical men can copy, and, as it were, reproduce. Do not think that that is a mere pulpit paradox. He is indeed pre-eminent, one with whom man may be contrasted rather than compared. He stands in a supreme order, or, as it were, by Himself. So much is this the case that to love Him is to love all mankind, to serve Him is to serve man and God and eternity. In obedience to Him and in honor of His name, men have built great churches, reared immense cathedrals, that look down upon their commerce and preside over their daily life; in honor of His name they have chosen reproach, surrender of pleasures of sin, and lived the highest and noblest life, and for love of Him they have courted shame. Love of Him has quieted their heart, angry at its own suffering, and given richer and newer meaning to all the passions and all the pages of time. When you look at him in His relation to man, He is alone the one Being who has no fellow, the one Power that is the power in life, in thought, in character.

#### *Saints in Common Life.*

Yet this very supremacy makes Him universal. He who is unlike all men is imitable by every man; the character He is all men may be, and His great passion is to make them become so. Herein lies one of the strange and distinctive evidences, as it were, of His mission and His work. Great men are never imitable in the elements of their most distinctive greatness. In the middle of this century we had a great and potent teacher, who never tired in

preaching his gospel, which consisted of two great elements—let work be prayer and find the hero, the great man worshipping, for that is the only religion now possible. Obey him, for he is the only King that can now reign ; and he used to tell in ever varying phrase that if we did not submit to the hero, but insisted in regulating our own lives, making our own laws, directing our own ends, then we should shoot Niagara, and be drawn into the awful sweep of those waters, rush on to a destruction that destroys all things but itself. Yet he forgot that human genius is but a passing thing, the hero of man makes miry clay. His gospel any man might preach. He found the highest God for man to be in humanity ; his gospel we may not preach who know a higher God than man. Genius as genius is never imitable. It leaves its creations ; it does not leave itself for possession ; for he can make his epic or his drama, but it is his creation that he leaves us to admire, not his genius that he leaves to imitate. So, too, the great thinker may coin the thought that is within him into gold that circulates in the mart of the mind, and is there minted into thin, light coin that does for the daily counters of life, but still it is only the creation that we have ; it is not the mind created that we can imitate. So, too, churches have their saints. Catholicism creates the being that lives in ecstasy, the vision that secs strange things—a great martyr or a father or statesmen that does a great service, gives him canonical dignity, beatifies him indeed as though he were divine. What we need is to canonize the mother, whose soft hand shapes all manhood and womanhood of the future ; what we need is to canonize the workman who in the workshop and midst living profanity bears a character that is without reproach, and a name that compels us to honor him ; what we need is to create out of those who keep living, in the exchange, in the warehouse, in the Senate, the virtues that we deem humanity, and make this life of ours nearer to the life of God.

Here you see the marvellous thing that makes Christ. It is not in what is extraordinary, but in what is ordinary ; it is not what flares up on the forefront of the morning sky, but what is humble, domestic, civic, religious after a fashion possible to common men and women. It is this marvellous ordinariness, if I may so call it, this universality, fit for all men in all places, that makes Christ a pre-eminently imitable character. Not in what is exceptional, but in what is law ; not in what is unusual, but in what is common ; not in what is a thing of genius, but in what is a gift of God, lies the great and beautiful power of Christ, the character we can imitate. Let me express and represent how very varied the phases and aspects in which He appears to men may be seen. It is strange, but true, that the religiousness or piety of an age can best be seen in its sensitiveness to the personal influence of Christ. Dogma, creed, system—these are things easily served ; but you keep man nearer to God through a direct, personal study of Jesus than through all the teaching and all the creeds ever formulated by all

the churches in Christendom. Yet see how often these creeds turn back upon Him and give Him another and less noble complexion than He has in His own gospels.

### *Christ in Art and Literature.*

Turn to the history of Christian art and literature as expressed in the conception of Jesus and see what it says. In earliest Christian art Jesus appears as a radiant youth; a kind of eternal youthfulness looks out from His placid and radiant brow. Something of the old Greek love of beauty still lived, and they made Jesus beautiful—beautiful as the dream of man could make Him. They represented Him in two forms: first as a Teacher sitting in the midst of His disciples, creating life and making radiant, whose very person is a lesson in moral and physical beauty. The other form is the form of a Shepherd, coming home with lamb or the lost sheep, bearing the one in His arms and the other on His shoulder, bearing it, by strength which yet was love, home to safety and to God. When the world which was the Church grew further and further from His Spirit and became possessed by the sadness of a disordered mind and threw back upon Him a misery and a pain unknown to the older Christ, then you see the Mediæval Master rise, the man who suffered pain; and they began to represent Him with a crown of thorns, to represent Him with the wounded hands and the wounded side. And you have it in His modern reproduction—the weariness of the Carpenter in His workshop, tired with anguish, raising Himself in His weariness and shaping Himself like a cross and casting its shadow upon His simple-minded mother. The art that sees in Christ only the Man of Sorrow, only the One who never had, as it were, the ever-radiant beauty save as a child in His mother's arms is surely false to life. I would not speak one ungenerous word of that great devotional mood; its spirit of devotion is beautiful, needful, never more needful than now; it is the quality of its devotion that needs to be entirely and radically changed. It turns an ascetic face to Him. What underlies it is the complaint of the preacher, of the old sceptic that survives in Ecclesiastes who preaches "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" and he turns from the world with that feeling, renouncing all and giving himself up to monastic seclusion and the misery that it brings. Never was this monastic self-torture in life native to Christ. He never said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." A devotion based on the spirit of vanity as expressed here is not a devotion that expresses the soul and the inspiration of Christ. He loved man; He was an enemy of disease as well as of sin; He was physician of the soul, but also of the body. He did not love to see the blind man sitting by the wayside begging; blindness He labored to remove, and begging He labored to end. As He loved life He loved joy. His first gracious appearance was at a wedding feast, making the joy of the wedding more abundant with His presence. He loved

nature with a rich, great affection. Take the sermon on the lily and see how He appreciated its pure and tender beauty! Look at the parables, and hear how He expresses His feelings with regard to the cultivation of the mustard seed, the sower going out to sow, the growth of the vine and the fig tree. Many a day He must have spent on the hills that clustered around Nazareth, many a time He must have walked out into the valleys with tender imagination and fancy free, dwelling on the things they symbolized—the great Heaven above, and the silent yet everywhere present God.

So Jesus drawing in upon Him all that was beautiful in nature, placing Himself against all that was evil in man, gave us His great example, an example that carried with it suffering. He who would cure ill must suffer from the ill he cures in doing it. He took upon Him our sin, for the man who never stooped to sin, to ignorance, never helped to do away with it, the man who never saw crime, never ended it. The passion of Christ was a passion to save, that involved hatred of ill and sin, but love of life.

So I ask you to consider the character you have to imitate, the example you have to follow, and—mark it well—there does not go before it a cross, and the singing of hymns after it; He is not clothed in stole and mitre; He is not clad in hood and gown; His part of the procession is in amongst the ranks of pain and suffering men. The cross lays on Him daily, and He bears it; He does it that He may redeem men from sin, that He may end its reign and bring peace. He does not come without a framework of law and order; but never did you find in the whole history of man any one who said so little about machinery; He had so little machinery about Him. All He did was impersonated in Himself, and through Himself passed out to affect, to influence, to lead, to inspire men. Man he was that man he might make; suffer He did, that suffering He might end. So stand before Him! Let no modern man, no modern system, no office and no function, come between you and Him! Work after the manner and according to the model of the Great Original; be ye Christians by being Christ-like, then shall ye continue His work among men. Make men still feel that Christ He lives, and that Christ He saves, Son of God by being Son of Man, for evermore.

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